THE

ITALIAN,

OR THE

CONFESSIONAL of the BLACK PENITENTS.

A ROMANCE.

BY

ANN RADCLIFFE,

AUTHOR OF THE MYSTERIES OF UDOLPHO, &c. &c.

He, wrapt in clouds of myſtery and ſilence,
Broods o'er his paſſions, bodies them in deeds,
And ſends them forth on wings of Fate to others:
Like the inviſible Will, that guides us,
Unheard, unknown, unſearchable!

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE

ITALIAN.

CHAP. I.

Mark where yon ruin frowns upon the ſteep,
The giant-ſpectre of departed power!
Within thoſe ſhadowy walls and ſilent chambers
Have ſtalked the crimes of days long paſt!

ON this day, Schedoni was more communicative than on the preceding one. While they rode apart from the guide, he converſed with Ellena on various topics relative to herſelf, but without once alluding to Vivaldi, and even condeſcended to mention his deſign of diſpoſing of her in a convent at ſome diſ-

tance from Naples, till it ſhould be convenient for him to acknowledge her for his daughter. But the difficulty of finding a ſuitable ſituation embarraſſed him, and he was diſconcerted by the aukwardneſs of introducing her himſelf to ſtrangers, whoſe curioſity would be heightened by a ſenſe of their intereſt.

Theſe conſiderations induced him the more eaſily to attend to the diſtreſs of Ellena, on her learning that ſhe was again to be placed at a diſtance from her home, and among ſtrangers; and the more willingly to liſten to the account ſhe gave of the convent della Pieta, and to her requeſt of returning thither. But in whatever degree he might be inclined to approve, he liſtened without conſenting, and Ellena had only the conſolation of perceiving that he was not abſolutely determined to adopt his firſt plan.

Her thoughts were too deeply engaged upon her future proſpects to permit

mit leiſure for preſent fears, or probably ſhe would have ſuffered ſome return of thoſe of yeſterday, in traverſing the lonely plains and rude vallies, through which the road lay. Schedoni was thankful to the landlord, who had adviſed him to keep the guide, the road being frequently obſcured amongſt the wild heaths that ſtretched around, and the eye often ſweeping over long tracts of country, without perceiving a village, or any human dwelling. During the whole morning, they had not met one traveller, and they continued to proceed beneath the heat of noon, becauſe Schedoni had been unable to diſcover even a cottage, in which ſhelter and repoſe might be obtained.

It was late in the day when the guide pointed out the grey walls of an edifice, which crowned the acclivity they were approaching. But this was ſo ſhrouded among woods, that no feature of it could be diſtinctly ſeen, and it did but ſlightly awa-

ken their hopes of diſcovering a convent, which might receive them with hoſpitality.

The high banks overſhadowed with thickets, between which the road aſcended, ſoon excluded even a glimpſe of the walls; but, as the travellers turned the next projection, they perceived a perſon on the ſummit of the road, croſſing as if towards ſome place of reſidence, and concluded that the edifice they had ſeen was behind the trees, among which he had diſappeared.

A few moments brought them to the ſpot, where, retired at a ſhort diſtance among the woods that browed the hill, they obſerved the extenſive remains of what ſeemed to have been a villa, and which, from the air of deſolation it exhibited, Schedoni would have judged to be wholly deſerted, had he not already ſeen a perſon enter. Wearied and exhauſted, he determined to aſcertain whether any refreſhment could be procured from

from the inhabitants within, and the party alighted before the portal of a deep and broad avenue of arched ſtone, which ſeemed to have been the grand approach to the villa. Over this majeſtic portal roſe the light boles and tall heads of aloes; while the Indian-fig threw its broad leaves in many a luxuriant cluſter among the capitals and rich ornaments below. The entrance was obſtructed by fragments of columns, and by the underwood that had taken root amongſt them. The travellers, however, eaſily overcame theſe interruptions: but, as the avenue was of conſiderable extent, and as its only light proceeded from the portal, except what a few narrow loops in the walls admitted, they ſoon found themſelves involved in an obſcurity that rendered the way difficult, and Schedoni endeavoured to make himſelf heard by the perſon he had ſeen. The effort was unſucceſsful, but, as they proceeded, a bend in the paſſage ſhewed a

diſtant glimmering of light, which ſerved to guide them to the oppoſite entrance, where an arch opened immediately into a court of the villa. Schedoni pauſed here in diſappointment, for every object ſeemed to bear evidence of abandonment and deſolation; and he looked, almoſt hopeleſsly, round the light colonnade which ran along three ſides of the court, and to the palmetos that waved over the fourth, in ſearch of the perſon, who had been ſeen from the road. No human figure ſtole upon the vacancy; yet the apt fears of Ellena almoſt imaged the form of Spalatro gliding behind the columns, and ſhe ſtarted as the air ſhook over the wild plants that wreathed them, before ſhe diſcovered that it was not the ſound of ſteps. At the extravagance of her ſuſpicions, however, and the weakneſs of her terrors, ſhe bluſhed, and endeavoured to reſiſt that propenſity to fear, which nerves long preſſed upon had occaſioned in her mind.

Schedoni,

Schedoni, mean while, ſtood in the court, like the evil ſpirit of the place, examining its deſolation, and endeavouring to aſcertain whether any perſon lurked in the interior of the building. Several doorways in the colonnade appeared to lead to chambers of the villa, and, after a ſhort heſitation, Schedoni, having determined to purſue his inquiry, entered one of them, and paſſed through a marble hall to a ſuite of rooms, whoſe condition told how long it was ſince they had been inhabited. The roofs had entirely vaniſhed, and even portions of the walls had fallen, and lay in maſſes amongſt the woods without.

Perceiving that it was as uſeleſs as difficult to proceed, the confeſſor returned to the court, where the ſhade of the palmetos, at leaſt, offered an hoſpitable ſhelter to the wearied travellers. They repoſed themſelves beneath the towering branches, on ſome fragments of a

marble fountain, whence the court opened to the extenſive landſcape, now mellowed by the evening beams, and partook of the remains of a repaſt, which had been depoſited in the wallet of the guide.

"This place appears to have ſuffered from an earthquake, rather than from time," ſaid Schedoni, "for the walls, though ſhattered, do not ſeem to have decayed, and much that has been ſtrong lies in ruin, while what is comparatively ſlight remains uninjured; theſe are certainly ſymptoms of partial ſhocks of the earth. Do you know any thing of the hiſtory of this place, friend?"

"Yes, Signor," replied the guide.

"Relate it, then."

"I ſhall never forget the earthquake that deſtroyed it, Signor; for it was felt all through the Garganus. I was then about ſixteen, and I remember it was near an hour before midnight that the great ſhock was felt. The weather had been almoſt

ſtifling

ſtifling for ſeveral days, ſcarcely a breath of air had ſtirred, and ſlight tremblings of the ground were noticed by many people. I had been out all day, cutting wood in the foreſt with my father, and tired enough we were, when——"

"This is the hiſtory of yourſelf," ſaid Schedoni, interrupting him, "Who did this place belong to?"

"Did any perſon ſuffer here?" aſked Ellena.

"The Baróne di Cambruſca lived here," replied the guide.

"Hah! the Baróne!" repeated Schedoni, and ſunk into one of his cuſtomary fits of abſtraction.

"He was a Signor little loved in the country," continued the guide, "and ſome people ſaid it was a judgment upon him for ——"

"Was it not rather a judgment upon the country," interrupted the Confeſſor, liſting up his head, and then ſinking again into ſilence.

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"I know not for that, Signor, but he had committed crimes enough to make one's hair ſtand on end. It was here that he ——"

"Fools are always wondering at the actions of thoſe above them," ſaid Schedoni, teſtily; "Where is the Baróne now?"

"I cannot tell, Signor, but moſt likely where he deſerves to be, for he has never been heard of ſince the night of the earthquake, and it is believed he was buried under the ruins."

"Did any other perſon ſuffer?" repeated Ellena.

"You ſhall hear, Signora," replied the peaſant, "I happen to know ſomething about the matter, becauſe a couſin of our's lived in the family at the time, and my father has often told me all about it, as well as of the late lord's goings-on. It was near midnight when the great ſhock came, and the family, thinking of nothing

at

at all, had ſupped, and been aſleep ſome time. Now it happened, that the Baróne's chamber was in a tower of the old building, at which people often wondered, becauſe, ſaid they, why ſhould he chuſe to ſleep in the old part when there are ſo many fine rooms in the new villa? but ſo it was."

"Come, diſpatch your meal," ſaid Schedoni, awaking from his deep muſing, "the ſun is ſetting, and we have yet far to go."

"I will finiſh the meal and the ſtory together, Signor, with your leave," replied the guide. Schedoni did not notice what he ſaid, and, as the man was not forbidden, he proceeded with his relation.

"Now it happened, that the Baróne's chamber was in that old tower,—if you will look this way, Signora, you may ſee what is left of it."

Ellena turned her attention to where the guide pointed, and perceived the ſhattered

tered remains of a tower riſing beyond the arch, through which ſhe had entered the court.

"You ſee that corner of a window caſe, left in the higheſt part of the wall, Signora," continued the guide, "juſt by that fig-tree, which grows out of the ſtone."

"I obſerve," ſaid Ellena.

"Well, that was one of the windows of the very chamber, Signora, and you ſee ſcarcely any thing elſe is left of it. Yes, there is the door-caſe, too, but the door itſelf is gone; that little ſtaircaſe, which you ſee beyond it, led up to another ſtory, which nobody now would gueſs had ever been; for roof, and flooring, and all are fallen. I wonder how that little ſtaircaſe in the corner happened to hold ſo faſt!"

"Have you almoſt done?" inquired Schedoni, who had not apparently attended to any thing the man ſaid, and now alluded to the refreſhment he was taking.

"Yes,

"Yes, Signor, I have not a great deal more to tell, or to eat either, for that matter," replied the guide; "but you ſhall hear. Well, yonder was the very chamber, Signora; at that door-caſe, which is ſtill in the wall, the Baróne came in; ah! he little thought, I warrant, that he ſhould never more go out at it! How long he had been in the room I do not know, nor whether he was aſleep, or awake, for there is nobody that can tell; but when the great ſhock came, it ſplit the old tower at once, before any other part of the buildings. You ſee that heap of ruins, yonder, on the ground, Signora, there lie the remains of the chamber; the Baróne, they ſay, was buried under them!"

Ellena ſhuddered while ſhe gazed upon this deſtructive maſs. A groan from Schedoni ſtartled her, and ſhe turned towards him, but, as he appeared ſhrouded in meditation, ſhe again directed her attention

attention to this awful memorial. As her eye paſſed upon the neighbouring arch, ſhe was ſtruck with the grandeur of its proportions, and with its ſingular appearance, now that the evening rays glanced upon the overhanging ſhrubs, and darted a line of partial light athwart the avenue beyond. But what was her emotion, when ſhe perceived a perſon gliding away in the perſpective of the avenue, and, as he croſſed where the gleam fell, diſtinguiſhed the figure and countenance of Spalatro! She had ſcarcely power faintly to exclaim, "Steps go there!" before he had diſappeared; and, when Schedoni looked round, the vacuity and ſilence of ſolitude every where prevailed.

Ellena now did not ſcruple poſitively to affirm that ſhe had ſeen Spalatro, and Schedoni, fully ſenſible that, if her imagination had not deluded her, the purpoſe of his thus tracing their route muſt be deſperate, immediately roſe, and, followed by

by the peaſant, paſſed into the avenue to aſcertain the truth, leaving Ellena alone in the court. He had ſcarcely diſappeared before the danger of his adventuring into that obſcure paſſage, where an aſſaſſin might ſtrike unſeen, forcibly occurred to Ellena, and ſhe loudly conjured him to return. She liſtened for his voice, but heard only his retreating ſteps; when, too anxious to remain where ſhe was, ſhe haſtened to the entrance of the avenue. But all was now huſhed; neither voice, nor ſteps were diſtinguiſhed. Awed by the gloom of the place, ſhe feared to venture further, yet almoſt equally dreaded to remain alone in any part of the ruin, while a man ſo deſperate as Spalatro wa hovering about it.

As ſhe yet liſtened at the entrance of the avenue, a faint cry, which ſeemed to iſſue from the interior of the villa, reached her. The firſt dreadful ſurmiſe that ſtruck Ellena was, that they were mur-

murdering her father, who had probably been decoyed, by another paſſage, back into ſome chamber of the ruin; when, inſtantly forgetting every fear for herſelf, ſhe haſtened towards the ſpot whence ſhe judged the ſound to have iſſued. She entered the hall, which Schedoni had noticed, and paſſed on through a ſuite of apartments beyond. Every thing here, however, was ſilent, and the place apparently deſerted. The ſuite terminated in a paſſage, that ſeemed to lead to a diſtant part of the villa, and Ellena, after a momentary heſitation, determined to follow it.

She made her way with difficulty between the half demoliſhed walls, and was obliged to attend ſo much to her ſteps, that ſhe ſcarcely noticed whither ſhe was going, till, the deepening ſhade of the place recalling her attention, ſhe perceived herſelf among the ruins of the tower, whoſe hiſtory had been related by

by the guide; and, on looking up, obſerved ſhe was at the foot of the ſtaircaſe, which ſtill wound up the wall that had led to the chamber of the Baróne.

At a moment leſs anxious, the circumſtance would have affected her; but now, ſhe could only repeat her calls upon the name of Schedoni, and liſten for ſome ſignal that he was near. Still receiving no anſwer, nor hearing any further ſound of diſtreſs, ſhe began to hope that her fears had deceived her, and having aſcertained that the paſſage terminated here, ſhe quitted the ſpot.

On regaining the firſt chamber, Ellena reſted for a moment to recover breath; and, while ſhe leaned upon what had once been a window, opening to the court, ſhe heard a diſtant report of fire arms. The ſound ſwelled, and ſeemed to revolve along the avenue through which Schedoni had diſappeared.

Sup-

—Suppoſing that the combatants were engaged at the furtheſt entrance, Ellena was preparing to go thither, when a ſudden ſtep moved near her, and, on turning, ſhe diſcovered, with a degree of horror that almoſt deprived her of recollection, Spalatro himſelf ſtealing along the very chamber in which ſhe was.

That part of the room which ſhe ſtood in, fell into a kind of receſs; and whether it was this circumſtance that prevented him from immediately perceiving her, or that, his chief purpoſe being directed againſt another object, he did not chuſe to pauſe here, he paſſed on with ſkulking ſteps; and, before Ellena had determined whither to go, ſhe obſerved him croſs the court before her, and enter the avenue. As he had paſſed, he looked up at the window: and it was certain he then ſaw her, for he inſtantly faltered, but in the next mo-

moment proceeded ſwiftly, and diſappeared in the gloom.

It ſeemed that he had not yet encountered Schedoni, but it alſo occurred to Ellena, that he was gone into the avenue for the purpoſe of waiting to aſſaſſinate him in the darkneſs. While ſhe was meditating ſome means of giving the Confeſſor a timely alarm of his danger, ſhe once more diſtinguiſhed his voice. It approached from the avenue, and Ellena immediately calling aloud that Spalatro was there, entreated him to be on his guard. In the next inſtant a piſtol was fired there.

Among the voices that ſucceeded the report, Ellena thought ſhe diſtinguiſhed groans. Schedoni's voice was in the next moment heard again, but it ſeemed faint and low. The courage which ſhe had before exerted was now exhauſted; ſhe remained fixed to the ſpot, unable to encounter the dreadful ſpectacle that pro-

probably awaited her in the avenue, and almoſt ſinking beneath the expectation of it.

All was now huſhed; ſhe liſtened for Schedoni's voice, and even for a foot-ſtep—in vain. To endure this ſtate of uncertainty much longer was ſcarcely poſſible, and Ellena was endeavouring to collect fortitude to meet a knowledge of the worſt, when ſuddenly a feeble groaning was again heard. It ſeemed near, and to be approaching ſtill nearer. At that moment, Ellena, on looking towards the avenue, perceived a figure covered with blood, paſs into the court. A film, which drew over her eyes, prevented her noticing further. She tottered a few paces back, and caught at the fragment of a pillar, by which ſhe ſupported herſelf. The weakneſs was, however, tranſient; immediate aſſiſtance appeared neceſſary to the wounded perſon, and pity ſoon predominating over horror,

ſhe

ſhe recalled her ſpirits, and haſtened to the court.

When, on reaching it, ſhe looked round in ſearch of Schedoni, he was no where to be ſeen; the court was again ſolitary and ſilent, till ſhe awakened all its echoes with the name of *father*. While ſhe repeated her calls, ſhe haſtily examined the colonnade, the ſeparated chamber which opened immediately from it, and the ſhadowy ground beneath the palmetos, but without diſcovering any perſon.

As ſhe turned towards the avenue, however, a track of blood on the ground told her too certainly where the wounded perſon had paſſed. It guided her to the entrance of a narrow paſſage, that ſeemingly led to the foot of the tower; but here ſhe heſitated, fearing to truſt the obſcurity beyond. For the firſt time, Ellena conjectured, that not Schedoni, but Spalatro might be the per-

perſon ſhe had ſeen, and that, though he was wounded, vengeance might give him ſtrength to ſtrike his ſtiletto at the heart of whomſoever approached him, while the duſkineſs of the place would favour the deed.

She was yet at the entrance of the paſſage, fearful to enter, and reluctant to leave it, liſtening for a ſound, and ſtill hearing at intervals, ſwelling though feeble groans; when quick ſteps were ſuddenly heard advancing up the grand avenue, and preſently her own name was repeated loudly in the voice of Schedoni. His manner was hurried as he advanced to meet her, and he threw an eager glance round the court. "We muſt be gone," ſaid he, in a low tone, and taking her arm within his. "Have you ſeen any one paſs?"

"I have ſeen a wounded man enter the court," replied Ellena, "and feared he was yourſelf."

"Where?

"Where?—Which way did he go!" inquired Schedoni, eagerly, while his eyes glowed, and his countenance became fell.

Ellena, inſtantly comprehending his motive for the queſtion, would not acknowledge that ſhe knew whither Spalatro had withdrawn; and, reminding him of the danger of their ſituation, ſhe entreated that they might quit the villa immediately.

"The ſun is already ſet," ſhe added. "I tremble at what may be the perils of this place at ſuch an obſcure hour, and even at what may be thoſe of our road at a later!"

"You are ſure he was wounded?" ſaid the Confeſſor.

"Too ſure," replied Ellena, faintly.

"Too ſure!" ſternly exclaimed Schedoni.

"Let us depart, my father; O let us go this inſtant!" repeated Ellena.

"What is the meaning of all this!" aſked Schedoni, with anger. "You cannot, ſurely, have the weakneſs to pity this fellow!"

"It is terrible to ſee any one ſuffer," ſaid Ellena. "Do not, by remaining here, leave me a poſſibility of grieving for you. What anguiſh it would occaſion you, to ſee me bleed; judge, then, what muſt be mine, if you are wounded by the dagger of an aſſaſſin!"

Schedoni ſtifled the groan which ſwelled from his heart, and abruptly turned away.

"You trifle with me," he ſaid, in the next moment: "you do not know that the villain is wounded. I fired at him, it is true, at the inſtant I ſaw him enter the avenue, but he has eſcaped me. What reaſon have you for your ſuppoſition?"

Ellena was going to point to the track of blood on the ground, at a little diſtance, but reſtrained herſelf; conſidering that

that this might guide him on to Spalatro, and again she entreated they might depart, adding, "O! spare yourself, and him!"

"What! spare an assassin!" said Schedoni, impatiently.

"An assassin! He *has*, then, attempted your life?" exclaimed Ellena.

"Why no, not absolutely that," replied Schedoni, recollecting himself, "but—what does the fellow do here? Let me pass, I will find him."

Ellena still hung upon his garment, while, with persuasive tenderness, she endeavoured to awaken his humanity. "O! if you had ever known what it was to expect instant death," she continued, "you would pity this man now, as he, perhaps, has sometime pitied others! I have known such suffering, my father, and can, therefore, feel even for him!"

"Do you know for *whom* you are pleading?" said the distracted Schedoni,

while every word ſhe had uttered ſeemed to have penetrated his heart. The ſurprize which this queſtion awakened in Ellena's countenance, recalled him to a conſciouſneſs of his imprudence; he recollected that Ellena did not certainly know the office with which Spalatro had been commiſſioned againſt her: and when he conſidered that this very Spalatro, whom Ellena had with ſuch ſimplicity ſuppoſed to have, at ſome time, ſpared a life through pity, had in truth ſpared her own, and, yet more, had been eventually a means of preventing him from deſtroying his own child, the Confeſſor turned in horror from his deſign; all his paſſions changed, and he abruptly quitted the court, nor pauſed till he reached the furtheſt extremity of the avenue, where the guide was in waiting with the horſes.

A recollection of the conduct of Spalatro reſpecting Ellena had thus induced Schedoni to ſpare him; but this was all; it

it did not prevail with him to inquire into the condition of this man, or to mitigate his punishment; and, without remorse, he now left him to his fate.

With Ellena it was otherwise; though she was ignorant of the obligation she owed him, she could not know that any human being was left under such circumstances of suffering and solitude without experiencing very painful emotion; but, considering how expeditiously Spalatro had been able to remove himself, she endeavoured to hope that his wound was not mortal.

The travellers, mounting their horses in silence, left the ruin, and were for some time too much engaged by the impression of the late occurrences, to converse together. When, at length, Ellena inquired the particulars of what had passed in the avenue, she understood that Schedoni, on pursuing Spalatro, had seen him there only for a moment. Spalatro

had eſcaped by ſome way unknown to the Confeſſor, and had regained the interior of the ruin, while his purſuers were yet following the avenue. The cry which Ellena had imagined to proceed from the interior, was uttered, as it now appeared, by the guide, who, in his haſte, had fallen over ſome fragments of the wall that lay ſcattered in the avenue: the firſt report of arms had been from the trombone, which Schedoni had diſcharged on reaching the portal; and the laſt, when he fired a piſtol, on perceiving Spalatro paſſing from the court.

"We have had trouble enough in running after this fellow," ſaid the guide, "and could not catch him at laſt. It is ſtrange that, if he came to look for us, he ſhould run away ſo when he had found us! I do not think he meant us any harm, after all, elſe he might have done it eaſily enough in that dark paſſage; inſtead whereof he only took to his heels!"

"Silence!"

"Silence!" ſaid Schedoni, "fewer words, friend."

"Well, Signor, he's peppered now, however; ſo we need not be afraid; his wings are clipped for one while, ſo he cannot overtake us. We need not be in ſuch a hurry, Signor, we ſhall get to the inn in good time yet. It is upon a mountain yonder, whoſe top you may ſee upon that red ſtreak in the weſt. He cannot come after us; I myſelf ſaw his arm was wounded."

"Did you ſo?" ſaid Schedoni, ſharply: "and pray where was you when you ſaw ſo much? It was more than I ſaw."

"I was cloſe at your heels, Signor, when you fired the piſtol."

"I do not remember to have heard you there," obſerved the Confeſſor: "and why did not you come forward, inſtead of retreating? And where, alſo, did you hide yourſelf while I was ſearching for the fellow, inſtead of aſſiſting me in the purſuit?"

The guide gave no anſwer, and Ellena, who had been attentively obſerving him during the whole of this converſation, perceived that he was now conſiderably embarraſſed; ſo that her former ſuſpicions as to his integrity began to revive, notwithſtanding the ſeveral circumſtances which had occurred to render them improbable. There was, however, at preſent no opportunity for further obſervation, Schedoni having, contrary to the advice of the guide, immediately quickened his pace, and the horſes continuing on the full gallop, till a ſteep aſcent compelled them to relax their ſpeed.

Contrary to his uſual habit, Schedoni now, while they ſlowly aſcended, appeared deſirous of converſing with this man, and aſked him ſeveral queſtions relative to the villa they had left; and, whether it was that he really felt an intereſt on the ſubject, or that he wiſhed

to

to diſcover if the man had deceived him in the circumſtances he had already narrated, from which he might form a judgment as to his general character, he preſſed his inquiries with a patient minuteneſs, that ſomewhat ſurprized Ellena. During this converſation, the deep twilight would no longer permit her to notice the countenance of either Schedoni, or the guide, but ſhe gave much attention to the changing tones of their voices, as different circumſtances and emotions ſeemed to affect them. It is to be obſerved, that during the whole of this diſcourſe, the guide rode at the ſide of Schedoni.

While the Confeſſor appeared to be muſing upon ſomething, which the peaſant had related reſpecting the Baróne di Cambruſca, Ellena inquired as to the fate of the other inhabitants of the villa.

" The falling of the old tower was enough for them," replied the guide; " the craſh waked them all directly, and

they had time to get out of the new buildings, before the ſecond and third ſhocks laid them alſo in ruins. They ran out into the woods for ſafety, and found it too, for they happened to take a different road from the earthquake. Not a ſoul ſuffered, except the Baróne, and he deſerved it well enough. O! I could tell ſuch things that I have heard of him! ——"

"What became of the reſt of the family?" interrupted Schedoni.

"Why, Signor, they were ſcattered here and there, and every where; and they none of them ever returned to the old ſpot. No! no! they had ſuffered enough there already, and might have ſuffered to this day, if the earthquake had not happened."

"If it had *not* happened?" repeated Ellena.

"Aye, Signora, for that put an end to the Baróne. If thoſe walls could but ſpeak, they could tell ſtrange things, for they

they have looked upon ſad doings: and that chamber, which I ſhewed you, Signora, nobody ever went into it but himſelf, except the ſervant, to keep it in order, and that he would ſcarcely ſuffer, and always ſtaid in the room the while."

"He had probably treaſure ſecreted there," obſerved Ellena.

"No, Signora, no treaſure! He had always a lamp burning there; and ſometimes in the night he has been heard—Once, indeed, his valet happened to—"

"Come on," ſaid Schedoni, interrupting him; "keep pace with me. What idle dream are you relating now?"

"It is about the Baróne di Cambruſca, Signor," replied the guide, raiſing his voice, "him that you was aſking me ſo much about juſt now. I was ſaying what ſtrange ways he had, and how that, on one ſtormy night in December, as my couſin Franciſco told my father, who told me, and he lived in the family at the time it happened—"

" What happened?" ſaid Schedoni, haſtily.

" What I am going to tell, Signor. My couſin lived there at the time; ſo, however *unbelievable* it may ſeem, you may depend upon it, it is all true. My father knows I would not believe it myſelf till—"

" Enough of this," ſaid Schedoni; " no more. What family had this Baróne—had he a wife at the time of this deſtructive ſhock?"

" Yes, truly, Signor, he had, as I was going to tell, if you would but condeſcend to have patience."

" The Baróne had more need of that, friend; I have no wife."—" The Baróne's wife had moſt need of it, Signor, as you ſhall hear. A good ſoul, they ſay, was the Baroneſſa! but luckily ſhe died many years before. He had a daughter, alſo, and, young as ſhe was, ſhe had lived too long, but for the earthquake which ſet her free.'

"How far is it to the inn? ſaid the Confeſſor, roughly.

"When we get to the top of this hill, Signor, you will ſee it on the next, if any light is ſtirring, for there will only be the hollow between us. But do not be frightened, Signor, the fellow we left cannot overtake us. Do you know much about him, Signor?"

Schedoni inquired whether the trombone was charged; and, diſcovering that it was not, ordered the man to load immediately.

"Why, Signor, if you knew as much of him as I do, you could not be more afraid!" ſaid the peaſant, while he ſtopped to obey the order.

"I underſtood that he was a ſtranger to you!" obſerved the Confeſſor, with ſurprize.

"Why, Signor, he is, and he is not; I know more about him than he thinks for."

"You

"You ſeem to know a vaſt deal too much of other perſons affairs," ſaid Schedoni, in a tone that was meant to ſilence him.

"Why, that is juſt what he would ſay, Signor; but bad deeds will out, whether people like them to be known or not. This man comes to our town ſometimes to market, and nobody knew where he came from for a long while; ſo they ſet themſelves to work and found it out at laſt."

"We ſhall never reach the ſummit of this hill," ſaid Schedoni, teſtily.

"And they found out, too, a great many ſtrange things about him," continued the guide.

Ellena, who had attended to this diſcourſe with a degree of curioſity that was painful, now liſtened impatiently for what might be further mentioned concerning Spalatro, but without daring to invite, by a ſingle queſtion, any diſcovery on

on a ſubject which appeared to be ſo intimately connected with Schedoni.

"It was many years ago," rejoined the guide, "that this man came to live in that ſtrange houſe on the ſea-ſhore. It had been ſhut up ever ſince—"

"What are you talking of now?" interrupted the Confeſſor, ſharply.

"Why, Signor, you never will let me tell you. You always ſnap me up ſo ſhort at the beginning, and then aſk—what I am talking about! I was going to begin the ſtory, and it is a pretty long one. But firſt of all, Signor, who do you ſuppoſe this man belonged to? And what do you think the people determined to do, when the report was firſt ſet a-going? only they could not be ſure it was true, and any body would be unwilling enough to believe ſuch a ſhocking—"

"I have no curioſity on the ſubject," replied the Confeſſor, ſternly interrupting him; "and deſire to hear no more concerning it."

"I meant

"I meant no harm, Signor," ſaid the man; "I did not know it concerned you."

"And who ſays that it does concern me?"

"Nobody, Signor, only you ſeemed to be in a bit of a paſſion, and ſo I thought ——But I meant no harm, Signor, only as he happened to be your guide part of the way, I gueſſed you might like to know ſomething of him."

"All that I deſire to know of my guide is, that he does his duty," replied Schedoni, "that he conducts me ſafely, and underſtands when to be ſilent."

To this the man replied nothing, but ſlackened his pace, and ſlunk behind his reprover.

The travellers reaching, ſoon after, the ſummit of this long hill, looked out for the inn of which they had been told; but darkneſs now confounded every object, and no domeſtic light twinkling, however

however diſtantly, through the gloom, gave ſignal of ſecurity and comfort. They deſcended dejectedly into the hollow of the mountains, and found themſelves once more immerged in woods. Schedoni again called the peaſant to his ſide, and bade him keep abreaſt of him, but he did not diſcourſe; and Ellena was too thoughtful to attempt converſation. The hints which the guide had thrown out reſpecting Spalatro, had increaſed her curioſity on that ſubject; but the conduct of Schedoni, his impatience, his embarraſſment, and the deciſive manner in which he had put an end to the talk of the peaſant, excited a degree of ſurprize, that bordered on aſtoniſhment. As ſhe had, however, no clue to lead her conjectures to any point, ſhe was utterly bewildered in ſurmiſe, underſtanding only that Schedoni had been much more deeply connected with Spalatro than ſhe had hitherto believed.

The travellers having deſcended into the hollow, and commenced the aſcent of the oppoſite height, without diſcovering any ſymptom of a neighbouring town, began again to fear that their conductor had deceived them. It was now ſo dark that the road, though the ſoil was a lime-ſtone, could ſcarcely be diſcerned, the woods on either ſide forming a "cloſe dungeon of innumerous boughs," that totally excluded the twilight of the ſtars.

While the Confeſſor was queſtioning the man, with ſome ſeverity, a faint ſhouting was heard from a diſtance, and he ſtopped the horſes to liſten from what quarter it came.

That comes the way we are going, Signor," ſaid the guide.

"Hark!" exclaimed Schedoni, "thoſe are ſtrains of revelry!"

A confuſed ſound of voices, laughter, and muſical inſtruments, was heard, and, as the air blew ſtronger, tamborines and flutes were diſtinguiſhed.

"Oh!

"Oh! Oh! we are near the end of our journey!" ſaid the peaſant; "all this comes from the town we are going to. But what makes them all ſo merry, I wonder!"

Ellena, revived by this intelligence, followed with alacrity the ſudden ſpeed of the Confeſſor; and preſently reaching a point of the mountain, where the woods opened, a cluſter of lights on another ſummit, a little higher, more certainly announced the town.

They ſoon after arrived at the ruinous gates, which had formerly led to a place of ſome ſtrength, and paſſed at once from darkneſs and deſolated walls, into a market place, blazing with light and reſounding with the multitude. Booths, fantaſtically hung with lamps, and filled with merchandize of every kind, diſpoſed in the gayeſt order, were ſpread on all ſides, and peaſants in their holiday cloaths, and parties of maſks crowded every avenue. Here

was

was a band of muſicians, and there a group of dancers; on one ſpot the *outré* humour of a zanni provoked the never-failing laugh of an Italian rabble; in another the *improviſatore*, by the pathos of his ſtory, and the perſuaſive ſenſibility of his ſtrains, was holding the attention of his auditors, as in the bands of magic. Further on was a ſtage raiſed for a diſplay of fire-works, and near this a theatre, where a mimic opera, the "ſhadow of a ſhade," was exhibiting, whence the roar of laughter, excited by the principal *buffo* within, mingled with the heterogeneous voices of the venders of ice, maccaroni, ſherbet, and diavoloni, without.

The Confeſſor looked upon this ſcene with diſappointment and ill-humonr, and bade the guide go before him, and ſhew the way to the beſt inn; an office which the latter undertook with great glee, though he made his way with difficulty. "To think I ſhould not know it was the time of

of the fair!" ſaid he, "though, to ſay truth, I never was at it but once in my life, and then I was only three months old, ſo it is not ſo ſurpriſing, Signor."

"Make way through the crowd," ſaid Schedoni.

"After jogging on ſo long in the dark, Signor, with nothing at all to be ſeen," continued the man, without attending to the direction, "then to come, all of a ſudden, to ſuch a place as this, why it is like coming out of purgatory into paradiſe! Well! Signor, you have forgot all your quandaries now; you think nothing now about that old ruinous place where we had ſuch a race after the man, that would not murder us; but that ſhot I fired did his buſineſs."

"You fired!" ſaid Schedoni, arouſed by the aſſertion.

"Yes, Signor, as I was looking over your ſhoulder; I ſhould have thought you muſt have heard it!"

"I ſhould have thought ſo, too, friend."

"Aye,

"Aye, Signor, this fine place has put all that out of your head, I warrant, as well as what I ſaid about that ſame fellow; but, indeed, Signor, I did not know he was related to you, when I talked ſo of him. But, perhaps, for all that, you may not know the piece of his ſtory I was going to tell you, when you cut me off ſo ſhort, though you are better acquainted with one another than I gueſſed for; ſo, when I come in from the fair, Signor, if you pleaſe, I will tell it you; and it is a pretty long hiſtory, for I happen to know the whole of it; though, where you cut me ſhort, when you was in one of thoſe quandaries, was only juſt at the beginning, but no matter for that, I can begin it again, for——"

"What is all this!" ſaid Schedoni, again recalled from one of the thoughtful moods in which he had ſo habitually indulged, that even the buſtle around him had failed to interrupt the courſe of his

mind. He now bade the peaſant be ſilent; but the man was too happy to be tractable, and proceeded to expreſs all he felt, as they advanced ſlowly through the crowd. Every object here was to him new and delightful; and, nothing doubting that it muſt be equally ſo to every other perſon, he was continually pointing out to the proud and gloomy Confeſſor the trivial ſubjects of his own admiration. "See! Signor, there is Punchinello, ſee! how he eats the hot maccaroni! And look there, Signor! there is a juggler! O! good Signor, ſtop one minute, to look at his tricks. See! he has turned a monk into a devil already, in the twinkling of an eye!"

"Silence! and proceed," ſaid Schedoni.

"That is what I ſay, Signor:—ſilence! for the people make ſuch a noiſe that I cannot hear a word you ſpeak.—Silence, there!"

"Con-

" Conſidering that you could not hear, you have anſwered wonderfully to the purpoſe," ſaid Ellena.

" Ah ! Signora ! is not this better than thoſe dark woods and hills ? But what have we here ? Look, Signor, here is a fine ſight !"

The crowd, which was aſſembled round a ſtage on which ſome perſons groteſquely dreſſed, were performing, now interrupting all further progreſs, the travellers were compelled to ſtop at the foot of the platform. The people above were acting what ſeemed to have been intended for a tragedy, but what their ſtrange geſtures, uncouth recitation, and incongruous countenances, had transformed into a comedy.

Schedoni, thus obliged to pauſe, withdrew his attention from the ſcene ; Ellena conſented to endure it, and the peaſant, with gaping mouth and ſtaring eyes, ſtood like a ſtatue, yet not knowing whether he ought to laugh or cry, till ſuddenly turning

ing round to the Confeſſor, whoſe horſe was of neceſſity cloſe to his, he ſeized his arm, and pointing to the ſtage, called out, "Look! Signor, ſee! Signor, what a ſcoundrel! what a villain! See! he has murdered his own daughter!"

At theſe terrible words, the indignation of Schedoni was done away by other emotions; he turned his eyes upon the ſtage, and perceived that the actors were performing the ſtory of Virginia. It was at the moment when ſhe was dying in the arms of her father, who was holding up the poniard with which he had ſtabbed her. The feelings of Schedoni, at this inſtant, inflicted a puniſhment almoſt worthy of the crime he had meditated.

Ellena, ſtruck with the action, and with the contraſt which it ſeemed to offer to what ſhe believed to have been the late conduct of Schedoni towards herſelf, looked at him with moſt expreſſive tenderneſs, and as his glance met her's, ſhe per-

ceived, with ſurprize, the changing emotions of his ſoul, and the inexplicable character of his countenance. Stung to the heart, the Confeſſor furiouſly ſpurred his horſe, that he might eſcape from the ſcene, but the poor animal was too ſpiritleſs and jaded, to force its way through the crowd; and the peaſant, vexed at being hurried from a place where, almoſt for the firſt time in his life, he was ſuffering under the ſtrange delights of artificial grief, and half angry, to obſerve an animal, of which he had the care, ill treated, loudly remonſtrated, and ſeized the bridle of Schedoni, who, ſtill more incenſed, was applying the whip to the ſhoulders of the guide, when the crowd ſuddenly fell back and opened a way, through which the travellers paſſed, and arrived, with little further interruption, at the door of the inn.

Schedoni was not in a humour which rendered him fit to encounter difficulties, and

and ſtill leſs the vulgar ſquabbles of a place already crowded with gueſts; yet it was not without much oppoſition that he at length obtained a lodging for the night. The peaſant was not leſs anxious for the accommodation of his horſes; and, when Ellena heard him declare, that the animal, which the Confeſſor had ſo cruelly ſpurred, ſhould have a double feed, and a bed of ſtraw as high as his head, if he himſelf went without one, ſhe gave him, unnoticed by Schedoni, the only ducat ſhe had left.

CHAP. II.

" But, if you be afraid to hear the worſt,
Then let the worſt, unheard, fall on your head."
SHAKESPEAR.

SCHEDONI paſſed the night without ſleep. The incident of the preceding evening had not only renewed the agonies of remorſe, but excited thoſe of pride and apprehenſion. There was ſomething in the conduct of the peaſant towards him, which he could not clearly underſtand, though his ſuſpicions were ſufficient to throw his mind into a ſtate of the utmoſt perturbation. Under an air of extreme ſimplicity, this man had talked of Spalatro, had diſcovered that he was acquainted with much of his hiſtory, and had hinted that he knew by whom he had been employed; yet at the ſame time appeared unconſcious, that

that Schedoni's was the maſter-hand, which had directed the principal actions of the ruffian. At other times, his behaviour had ſeemed to contradict the ſuppoſition of his ignorance on this point; from ſome circumſtances he had mentioned, it appeared impoſſible but that he muſt have known who Schedoni really was, and even his own conduct had occaſionally ſeemed to acknowledge this, particularly when, being interrupted in his hiſtory of Spalatro, he attempted an apology, by ſaying, he did not know it concerned Schedoni: nor could the conſcious Schedoni believe that the very pointed manner, in which the peaſant had addreſſed him at the repreſentation of Virginia, was merely accidental. He wiſhed to diſmiſs the man immediately, but it was firſt neceſſary to aſcertain what he knew concerning him, and then to decide on the meaſures to be taken. It was, however, a difficult matter to obtain this information,

tion, without manifeſting an anxiety, which might betray him, if the guide had, at preſent, only a general ſuſpicion of the truth; and no leſs difficult to determine how to proceed towards him, if it ſhould be evident that his ſuſpicions reſted on Spalatro. To take him forward to Naples, was to bring an informer to his home; to ſuffer him to return with his diſcovery, now that he probably knew the place of Schedoni's reſidence, was little leſs hazardous. His death only could ſecure the ſecret.

After a night paſſed in the tumult of ſuch conſiderations, the Confeſſor ſummoned the peaſant to his chamber, and, with ſome ſhort preface, told him he had no further occaſion for his ſervices, adding, careleſsly, that he adviſed him to be on his guard as he re-paſſed the villa, leſt Spalatro, who might yet lurk there, ſhould revenge upon him the injury he had received. "According to your account

count of him, he is a very dangerous fellow," added Schedoni; but your inforformation is, perhaps, erroneous."

The guide began, teſtily, to juſtify himſelf for his aſſertions, and the Confeſſor then endeavoured to draw from him what he knew on the ſubject. But, whether the man was piqued by the treatment he had lately received, or had other reaſons for reſerve, he did not, at firſt, appear ſo willing to communicate as formerly.

"What you hinted of this man," ſaid Schedoni, "has, in ſome degree, excited my curioſity: I have now a few moments of leiſure, and you may relate, if you will, ſomething of the wonderful hiſtory you talked of."

"It is a long ſtory, Signor, and you would be tired before I got to the end of it," replied the peaſant; "and, craving your pardon, Signor, I don't much like to be ſnapped up ſo!"

"Where did this man live?" ſaid the Confeſſor. "You mentioned ſomething of a houſe at the ſea-ſide.

"Aye, Signor, there is a ſtrange hiſtory belonging to that houſe, too; but this man, as I was ſaying, came there all of a ſudden, nobody knew how! and the place had been ſhut up ever ſince the Marcheſe——"

"The Marcheſe!" ſaid Schedoni, coldly, "what Marcheſe, friend?"—"Why, I mean the Baróne di Cambruſca, Signor, to be ſure, as I was going to have told you, of my own accord, if you would only have let me. Shut up ever ſince the Baróne——I left off there, I think."

"I underſtood that the Baróne was dead!" obſerved the Confeſſor.

"Yes, Signor," replied the peaſant, fixing his eyes on Schedoni; but what has his death to do with what I was telling? This happened before he died."

Schedoni, ſomewhat diſconcerted by this unexpected remark, forgot to reſent the

the familiarity of it. "This man, then, this Spalatro, was connected with the Baróne di Cambruſca?" ſaid he.

"It was pretty well gueſſed ſo, Signor."

"How! no more than gueſſed?"

"No, Signor, and that was more than enough for the Baróne's liking, I warrant. He took too much care for any thing certain to appear againſt him, and he was wiſe ſo to do, for if it had—it would have been worſe for him. But I was going to tell you the ſtory, Signor."

"What reaſons were there for believing this was an agent of the Baróne di Cambruſca, friend?"

"I thought you wiſhed to hear the ſtory, Signor."

"In good time; but firſt what were your reaſons?

"One of them is enough, Signor, and if you would only have let me gone ſtraight on with the ſtory, you would have found it out by this time, Signor."

Schedoni frowned, but did not otherwiſe reprove the impertinence of the remark.

" It was reaſon enough, Signor, to my mind," continued the peaſant, " that it was ſuch a crime as nobody but the Baróne di Cambruſca could have committed; there was nobody wicked enough, in our parts, to have done it but him. Why is not this *reaſon* enough, Signor? What makes you look at me ſo? why the Baróne himſelf could hardly have looked worſe, if I had told him as much!"

" Be leſs prolix," ſaid the Confeſſor, in a reſtrained voice.

" Well then, Signor, to begin at the beginning. It is a good many years ago that Marco came firſt to our town. Now the ſtory goes, that one ſtormy night——"

" You may ſpare yourſelf the trouble of relating the ſtory," ſaid Schedoni, abruptly,

abruptly, "Did you ever ſee the Baróne you was ſpeaking of, friend?"

"Why did you bid me tell it, Signor, ſince you know it already! I have been here all this while, juſt a-going to begin it, and all for nothing!"

"It is very ſurpriſing," reſumed the artful Schedoni, without having noticed what had been ſaid, "that if this Spalatro was known to be the villain you ſay he is, not any ſtep ſhould have been taken to bring him to juſtice! how happened that? But, perhaps, all this ſtory was nothing more than a report."

"Why, Signor, it was every body's buſineſs, and nobody's, as one may ſay; then, beſides, nobody could prove what they had heard, and though every body believed the ſtory juſt the ſame as if they had ſeen the whole, yet that, they ſaid, would not do in law, but they ſhould be made to prove it. Now, it is not one time in ten that any thing can be proved,

Signor, as you well know, yet we none of us believe it the leſs for that!"

"So, then, you would have had this man puniſhed for a murder, which, probably, he never committed!" ſaid the Confeſſor.

"A murder!" repeated the peaſant.

Schedoni was ſilent, but, in the next inſtant, ſaid, "Did you not ſay it was a murder?"

"I have not told you ſo, Signor!"

"What was the crime, then?" reſumed Schedoni, after another momentary pauſe, "you ſaid it was atrocious, and what more ſo than—murder?" His lip quivered as he pronounced the laſt word.

The peaſant made no reply, but remained with his eyes fixed upon the Confeſſor, and, at length, repeated, "Did I ſay it was murder, Signor?"

"If it was not that, ſay what it was," demanded the Confeſſor, haughtily; "but let it be in two words."

"As

"As if a ſtory could be told in two words, Signor!"

"Well, well, be brief."

"How can I, Signor, when the ſtory is ſo long!"

"I will waſte no more time," ſaid Schedoni, going.

"Well, Signor, I will do my beſt to make it ſhort. It was one ſtormy night in December, that Marco Torma had been out fiſhing. Marco, Signor, was an old man that lived in our town when I was a boy; I can but juſt remember him, but my father knew him well, and loved old Marco, and uſed often to ſay——"

"To the ſtory!" ſaid Schedoni.

"Why I am telling it, Signor, as faſt as I can. This old Marco did not live in our town at the time it happened, but in ſome place, I have forgot the name of it, near the ſea ſhore. What can the name be! it is ſomething like——"

"Well, what happened to this old dotard?

"You

"You are out there, Signor, he was no old dotard; but you ſhall hear. At that time, Signor, Marco lived in this place that I have forgot the name of, and was a fiſherman, but better times turned up afterwards, but that is neither here nor there. Old Marco had been out fiſhing; it was a ſtormy night, and he was glad enough to get on ſhore, I warrant. It was quite dark, as dark, Signor, I ſuppoſe, as it was laſt night, and he was making the beſt of his way, Signor, with ſome fiſh along the ſhore, but it being ſo dark, he loſt his way notwithſtanding. The rain beat, and the wind blew, and he wandered about a long while, and could ſee no light, nor hear any thing, but the ſurge near him, which ſometimes ſeemed as if it was coming to waſh him away. He got as far off it as he could, but he knew there were high rocks over the beach, and he was afraid he ſhould run his head againſt them, if he went too far, I ſuppoſe. However,

However, at laſt, he went up cloſe to them, and as he got a little ſhelter, he reſolved to try no further for the preſent. I tell it you, Signor, juſt as my father told it me, and he had it from the old man himſelf."

"You need not be ſo particular, replied the Confeſſor; "ſpeak to the point.

"Well, Signor, as old Marco lay ſnug under the rocks, he thought he heard ſomebody coming, and he lifted up his head, I warrant, poor old ſoul! as if he could have ſeen who it was; however, he could hear, though it was ſo dark, and he heard the ſteps coming on; but he ſaid nothing yet, meaning to let them come cloſe up to him, before he diſcovered himſelf. Preſently he ſees a little moving light, and it comes nearer and nearer, till it was juſt oppoſite to him, and then he ſaw the ſhadow of a man on the ground, and then he ſpied the man himſelf, with a dark lantern, paſſing along the beach."

"Well,

" Well, well, to the purpoſe," ſaid Schedoni.

" Old Marco, Signor, my father ſays, was never ſtout-hearted, and he took it into his head this might be a robber, becauſe he had the lantern, though, for that matter, he would have been glad enough of a lantern himſelf, and ſo he lay quiet. But, preſently, he was in a rare fright, for the man ſtopped to reſt the load he had upon his back, on a piece of rock near him, and Old Marco ſaw him throw off a heavy ſack, and heard him breathe hard, as if he was hugely tired. I tell it, Signor, juſt as my father does."

" What was in the ſack?" ſaid Schedoni, coolly.

" All in good time, Signor;" perhaps old Marco never found it out; but you ſhall hear. He was afraid, when he ſaw the ſack, to ſtir a limb, for he thought it held booty. But, preſently, the man, without ſaying a word, heaved it on his ſhoulders

ders again, and ſtaggered away with it along the beach, and Marco ſaw no more of him."

"Well! what has he to do with your ſtory, then?" ſaid the Confeſſor, "Was this Spalatro?"

"All in good time, Signor; you put me out. When the ſtorm was down a little, Marco crept out, and, thinking there muſt be a village, or a hamlet, or a cottage, at no great diſtance, ſince this man had paſſed, he thought he would try a little further. He had better have ſtaid where he was, for he wandered about a long while, and could ſee nothing, and what was worſe, the ſtorm came on louder than before, and he had no rocks to ſhelter him now. While he was in this quandary, he ſees a light at a diſtance, and it came into his head this might be the lantern again, but he determined to go on notwithſtanding, for if it was he could ſtop ſhort, and if it was not, he ſhould

ſhould get ſhelter, perhaps; ſo on he went, and I ſuppoſe I ſhould have done the ſame, Signor."

"Well! this hiſtory never will have an end!" ſaid Schedoni.

"Well! Signor, he had not gone far when he found out that it was no lantern, but a light at a window. When he came up to the houſe he knocked ſoftly at the door, but nobody came."

"What houſe?" inquired the Confeſſor, ſharply.

"The rain beat hard, Signor, and I warrant poor old Marco waited a long time before he knocked again, for he was main patient, Signor. O! how I have ſeen him liſten to a ſtory, let it be ever ſo long!"

"I have need of his patience!" ſaid Schedoni.

"When he knocked again, Signor, the door gave way a little, and he found it was open, and ſo, as nobody came, he thought fit to walk in of his own accord."

The

"The dotard! what buſineſs had he to be ſo curious?" exclaimed Schedoni.

"Curious, Signor, he only ſought ſhelter! He ſtumbled about in the dark, for a good while, and could find nobody, nor make nobody hear, but, at laſt, he came to a room where there was ſome fire not quite out, upon the hearth, and he went up to it, to warm himſelf, till ſomebody ſhould come."

"What! was there nobody in the houſe?" ſaid the Confeſſor.

"You ſhall hear, Signor. He had not been there, he ſaid, no, he was ſure not above two minutes, when he heard a ſtrange ſort of a noiſe in the very room where he was, but the fire gave ſuch a poor light, he could not ſee whether any body was there."

"What was the noiſe?"

"You put me out, Signor. He ſaid he did not much like it, but what could he do! So he ſtirred up the fire, and tried

to

to make it blaze a little, but it was as duſky as ever; he could ſee nothing. Preſently, however, he heard ſomebody coming, and ſaw a light, and then a man coming towards the room where he was, ſo he went up to him to aſk ſhelter."

"Who was this man?" ſaid Schedoni.

"Aſk ſhelter. He ſays the man, when he came to the door of the room, turned as white as a ſheet, as well he might, to ſee a ſtranger, to find a ſtranger there, at that time of the night. I ſuppoſe I ſhould have done the ſame myſelf. The man did not ſeem very willing to let him ſtay, but aſked what he did there, and ſuch like; but the ſtorm was very loud, and ſo Marco did not let a little matter daunt him, and, when he ſhewed the man what a fine fiſh he had in his baſket, and ſaid he was welcome to it, he ſeemed more willing."

"Incredible!" exclaimed Schedoni, "the blockhead!"

"He

"He had wit enough for that matter, Signor; Marco ſays he appeared to be main hungry——"

"Is that any proof of his wit?" ſaid the Confeſſor, peeviſhly.

"You never will let me finiſh, Signor; main hungry; for he put more wood on the fire directly, to dreſs ſome of the fiſh. While he was doing this, Marco ſays his heart, ſomehow, miſgave him, that this was the man he ſaw on the beach, and he looked at him pretty hard, till the other aſked him, croſsly, what he ſtared at him ſo for; but Marco took care not to tell. While he was buſy making ready the fiſh, however, Marco, had an opportunity of eying him the more, and every time the man looked round the room, which happened to be pretty often, he had a notion it was the ſame."

"Well, and if it was the ſame," ſaid Schedoni.

"But when Marco happened to ſpy the ſack, lying in a corner, he had no doubt about

about the matter. He ſays his heart then miſgave him ſadly, and he wiſhed himſelf ſafe out of the houſe, and determined, in his own mind, to get away as ſoon as he could, without letting the man ſuſpect what he thought of him. He now gueſſed, too, what made the man look round the room ſo often, and, though Marco thought before it was to find out if he had brought any body with him, he now believed it was to ſee whether his treaſure was ſafe."

"Aye, likely enough," obſerved Schedoni.

"Well, old Marco ſat not much at his eaſe, while the fiſh was preparing, and thought it was, 'out of the fryingpan into the fire' with him; but what could he do?"

"Why get up and walk away, to be ſure," ſaid the Confeſſor, "as I ſhall do, if your ſtory laſts much longer."

"You ſhall hear, Signor; he would have done ſo, if he had thought this man would have let him, but——"

"Well,

"Well, this man was Spalatro, I ſuppoſe," ſaid Schedoni, impatiently, "and this was the houſe on the ſhore you formerly mentioned."

"How well you have gueſſed it, Signor! though, to ſay truth, I have been expecting you to find it out for this half hour."

Schedoni did not like the ſignificant look which the peaſant aſſumed while he ſaid this, but he bade him proceed.

"At firſt, Signor, Spalatro hardly ſpoke a word, but he came to by degrees, and by the time the fiſh was nearly ready, he was talkative enough."

Here the Confeſſor roſe, with ſome emotion, and paced the room.

"Poor old Marco, Signor, began to think better of him, and when he heard the rain at the caſements, he was loath to think of ſtirring. Preſently Spalatro went out of the room for a plate to eat the fiſh.——"

"Out

"Out of the room?" ſaid Schedoni, and checked his ſteps.

"Yes, Signor, but he took care to carry the light with him. However, Marco, who had a great deal of curioſity to——"

"Yes, he appears to have had a great deal, indeed!" ſaid the Confeſſor, and turning away, renewed his pace.

"Nay, Signor, I am not come to that yet, he has ſhewn none yet;—a great deal of curioſity to know what was in the ſack, before he conſented to let himſelf ſtay much longer, thought this a good opportunity for looking, and as the fire was now pretty bright, he determined to ſee. He went up to the ſack, therefore, Signor, and tried to lift it, but it was too heavy for him, though it did not ſeem full."

Schedoni again checked his ſteps, and ſtood fixed before the peaſant.

"He raiſed it, however, a little, Signor, but it fell from his hands, and with ſuch a heavy

a heavy weight upon the floor, that he was ſure it held no common booty. Juſt then, he ſays, he thought he heard Spalatro coming, and the ſound of the ſack was enough to have frightened him, and ſo Marco quitted it; but he was miſtaken, and he went to it again. But you don't ſeem to hear me, Signor, for you look as you do when you are in thoſe quandaries, ſo buſy a-thinking, and I——"

"Proceed," ſaid Schedoni, ſternly, and renewed his ſteps, "I hear you."

"Went to it again," reſumed the peaſant, cautiouſly taking up the ſtory at the laſt words he had dropped. "He untied the ſtring, Signor, that held the ſack, and opened the cloth a little way, but think, Signor, what he muſt have thought, when he felt — cold fleſh! O, Signor! and when he ſaw by the light of the fire, the face of a corpſe within! O Signor!"

The peaſant, in the eagerneſs with which he related this circumſtance, had

followed Schedoni to the other end of the chamber, and he now took hold of his garment, as if to ſecure his attention to the remainder of the ſtory. The Confeſſor, however, continued his ſteps, and the peaſant kept pace with him, ſtill looſely holding his garment.

"Marco," he reſumed, "was ſo terrified, as my father ſays, that he hardly knew where he was, and I warrant, if one could have ſeen him, he looked as white, Signor, as you do now."

The Confeſſor abruptly withdrew his garment from the peaſant's graſp, and ſaid, in an inward voice, "If I am ſhocked at the mere mention of ſuch a ſpectacle, no wonder he was, who beheld it!" After the pauſe of a moment, he added,—"But what followed?"

"Marco ſays he had no power to tie up the cloth again, Signor, and when he came to his thoughts, his only fear was, leſt Spalatro ſhould return, though he had hardly

hardly been gone a minute, before he could get out of the houſe, for he cared nothing about the ſtorm now. And ſure enough he heard him coming, but he managed to get out of the room, into a paſſage another way from that Spalatro was in. And luckily, too, it was the ſame paſſage he had come in by, and it led him out of the houſe. He made no more ado, but ran ſtraight off, without ſtopping to chuſe which way, and many perils and dangers he got into among the woods, that night, and——"

"How happened it, that this Spalatro was not taken up, after this diſcovery?" ſaid Schedoni. "What was the conſequence of it?"

"Why, Signor, old Marco had like to have caught his death that night; what with the wet, and what with the fright, he was laid up with a fever, and was light-headed, and raved of ſuch ſtrange things, that people would not believe

any thing he ſaid when he came to his ſenſes."

"Aye," ſaid Schedoni, the narrative reſembles a delirious dream, more than a reality; I perfectly accord with them in their opinion of this feveriſh old man."

"But you ſhall hear, Signor; after a while they began to think better of it, and there was ſome ſtir made about it; but what could poor folks do, for nothing could be proved! The houſe was ſearched, but the man was gone, and nothing could be found! From that time the place was ſhut up; till many years after, this Spalatro appeared, and old Marco then ſaid he was pretty ſure he was the man, but he could not ſwear it, and ſo nothing could be done."

"Then it appears, after all, that you are not certain that this long hiſtory belongs to this Spalatro!" ſaid the Confeſſor; "nay, not even that the hiſtory it-

ſelf

ſelf is any thing more than the viſion of a diſtempered brain!"

"I do not know, Signor, what you may call certain; but I know what we all believe. But the ſtrangeſt part of the ſtory is to come yet, and that which nobody would believe, hardly, if——"

"I have heard enough, ſaid Schedoni, "I will hear no more!"

"Well but, Signor, I have not told you half yet: and I am ſure when I heard it myſelf it ſo terrified me."

"I have liſtened too long to this idle hiſtory," ſaid the Confeſſor, "there ſeems to be no rational foundation for it. Here is what I owe you; you may depart."

"Well, Signor, 'tis plain you know the reſt already, or you never would go without it. But you don't know, perhaps, Signor, what an unaccountable— I am ſure it made my hair ſtand an end to hear of it, what an unaccountable— —'

"I will hear no more of this abſurdity," interrupted Schedoni, with ſternneſs. "I reproach myſelf for having liſtened ſo long to ſuch a goſſip's tale, and have no further curioſity concerning it. You may withdraw; and bid the hoſt attend me."

"Well, Signor, if you are ſo eaſily ſatisfied," replied the peaſant, with diſappointment, "there is no more to be ſaid, but——"

"You may ſtay, however, while I caution you," ſaid Schedoni, "how you paſs the villa, where this Spalatro may yet linger, for, though I can only ſmile at the ſtory you have related——"

"Related, Signor! why I have not told it half; and if you would only pleaſe to be patient——"

"Though I can only ſmile at that ſimple narrative,"—repeated Schedoni, in a louder tone.

"Nay, Signor, for that matter, you can frown

frown at it too, as I can teſtify," muttered the guide.

"Liſten to me!" ſaid the Confeſſor, in a yet more inſiſting voice. "I ſay, that though I give no credit to your curious hiſtory, I think this ſame Spalatro appears to be a deſperate fellow, and, therefore, I would have you be on your guard. If you ſee him, you may depend upon it, that he will attempt your life in revenge of the injury I have done him. I give you, therefore, in addition to your trombone, this ſtiletto to defend you."

Schedoni, while he ſpoke, took an inſtrument from his boſom, but it was not the one he uſually wore, or, at leaſt, that he was ſeen to wear. He delivered it to the peaſant, who received it with a kind of ſtupid ſurpriſe, and then gave him ſome directions as to the way in which it ſhould be managed.

"Why, Signor," ſaid the man, who had liſtened with much attention, "I am

kindly obliged to you for thinking about me, but is there any thing in this ſtiletto different from others, that it is to be uſed ſo ?"

Schedoni looked gravely at the peaſant for an inſtant, and then replied, " Certainly not, friend, I would only inſtruct you to uſe it to the beſt advantage ;— farewell !"

" Thank you kindly, Signor, but—but I think I have no need of it, my trombone is enough for me."

" This will defend you more adroitly," replied Schedoni, refuſing to take back the ſtiletto, " and moreover, while you were loading the trombone your adverſary might uſe his poniard to advantage. Keep it, therefore, friend ; it will protect you better than a dozen trombones. Put it up."

Perhaps it was Schedoni's particular look, more than his argument, that convinced the guide of the value of his gift

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he received it ſubmiſſively, though with a ſtare of ſtupid ſurpriſe; probably it had been better, if it had been ſuſpicious ſurpriſe. He thanked Schedoni again, and was leaving the room, when the Confeſſor called out, "Send the landlord to me immediately, I ſhall ſet off for Rome without delay!"

"Yes, Signor," replied the peaſant, "you are at the right place, the road parts here; but I thought you was going for Naples!"

"For Rome," ſaid Schedoni.

"For Rome, Signor! Well, I hope you will get ſafe, Signor, with all my heart!" ſaid the guide, and quitted the chamber.

While this dialogue had been paſſing between Schedoni and the peaſant, Ellena, in ſolitude, was conſidering on the means of prevailing on the Confeſſor to allow her to return either to Altieri, or to the neighbouring cloiſter of "*Our Lady of*

Pity," inſtead of placing her at a diſtance from Naples, till he ſhould think proper to acknowledge her. The plan, which he had mentioned, ſeemed to her long-haraſſed mind to exile her for ever from happineſs, and all that was dear to her affections; it appeared like a ſecond baniſhment to San Stefano, and every abbeſs, except that of *La Pieta*, came to her imagination in the portraiture of an inexorable jailor. While this ſubject engaged her, ſhe was ſummoned to attend Schedoni, whom ſhe found impatient to enter the carriage, which at this town they had been able to procure. Ellena, on looking out for the guide, was informed that he had already ſet off for his home, a circumſtance, for the ſuddenneſs of which ſhe knew not how to account.

The travellers immediately proceeded on their journey; Schedoni, reflecting on the late converſation, ſaid little, and Ellena read not in his countenance any thing that might

might encourage her to introduce the ſubject of her own intended ſolicitation. Thus ſeparately occupied, they advanced during ſome hours on the road to Naples, for thither Schedoni had deſigned to go, notwithſtanding his late aſſertion to the guide, whom it appears, for whatever reaſon, he was anxious to deceive, as to the place of his actual reſidence.

They ſtopped to dine at a town of ſome conſideration, and, when Ellena heard the Confeſſor inquire concerning the numerous convents it contained, ſhe perceived that it was neceſſary for her no longer to defer her petition. She therefore repreſented immediately what muſt be the forlornneſs of her ſtate, and the anxiety of her mind, if ſhe were placed at a diſtance from the ſcenes and the people, which affection and early habit ſeemed to have conſecrated; eſpecially at this time, when her ſpirits had ſcarcely recovered from the ſevere preſſure of long-

ſuffering, and when to ſoothe and renovate them, not only quiet, but the conſciouſneſs of ſecurity, were neceſſary; a conſciouſneſs which it was impoſſible, and eſpecially ſo ſoon after her late experience, that ſhe could acquire among ſtrangers, till they ſhould ceaſe to be ſuch.

To theſe pleadings Schedoni thoughtfully attended, but the darkneſs of his aſpect did not indicate that his compaſſion was touched; and Ellena proceeded to repreſent, ſecondly, that which, had ſhe been more artful, or leſs diſdainful of cunning, ſhe would have urged the firſt. As it was, ſhe had begun with the mention of circumſtances, which, though ſhe felt to be moſt important to herſelf, were the leaſt likely to prevail with Schedoni, and ſhe concluded with repreſenting that, which was moſt intereſting to him. Ellena ſuggeſted, that her reſidence in the neighbourhood of Altieri might be ſo managed, as that his ſecret would be as effectually preſerved,

preſerved, as if ſhe were at an hundred miles from Naples.

It may appear extaordinary, that a man of Schedoni's habitual coolneſs, and exact calculation, ſhould have ſuffered fear, on this occaſion, to obſcure his perceptions; and this inſtance ſtrongly proved the magnitude of the cauſe, which could produce ſo powerful an effect. While he now liſtened to Ellena, he began to perceive circumſtances that had eluded his own obſervation; and he, at length, acknowledged, that it might be ſafer to permit her to return to Villa-Altieri, and that ſhe ſhould from thence go, as ſhe had formerly intended, to *La Pieta*, than to place her in any convent, however remote, where it would be neceſſary for himſelf to introduce her. His only remaining objection to the neighbourhood of Naples, now reſted on the chance it would offer the Marcheſa di Vivaldi of diſcovering Ellena's abode, before he ſhould judge it convenient

convenient to diſcloſe to her any hint reſpecting his family; and his knowledge of the Marcheſa juſtified his moſt horrible ſuſpicion, as to the conſequence of ſuch a premature diſcovery.

Something, however, it appeared, muſt be riſked in any ſituation he might chuſe for Ellena; and her reſidence at the *Santa della Pieta*, a large convent, well ſecured, and where, as ſhe had been known to them from her infancy, the abbeſs and the ſiſters might be ſuppoſed to be not indifferent concerning her welfare, ſeemed to promiſe ſecurity againſt any actual violence from the malice of the Marcheſa; againſt her artful duplicity every place would be almoſt equally inſufficient. Here, as Ellena would appear in the character ſhe had always been known in, no curioſity could be excited, or ſuſpicion awakened, as to her family; and here, therefore, Schedoni's ſecret would more probably be preſerved,

preſerved, than elſewhere. As this was, at preſent, the predominant ſubject of his anxiety, to which, however unnatural it may ſeem, even the ſafety of Ellena was ſecondary, he finally determined, that ſhe ſhould return to *La Pieta*; and ſhe thanked him almoſt with tears, for a conſent which ſhe received as a generous indulgence, but which was in reality little more than an effect of ſelfiſh apprehenſions.

The remainder of the journey, which was of ſome days, paſſed without any remarkable occurrence; Schedoni, with only ſhort intervals, was ſtill enveloped in gloom and ſilence; and Ellena, with thoughts engaged by the one ſubject of her intereſt, the preſent ſituation and circumſtances of Vivaldi, willingly ſubmitted to this prolonged ſtillneſs.

As, at length, ſhe drew near Naples, her emotions became more various and powerful; and when ſhe diſtinguiſhed the

the top of Veſuvius peering over every intervening ſummit, ſhe wept as her imagination charactered all the well-known country it overlooked. But when, having reached an eminence, that ſcenery was exhibited to her ſenſes, when the Bay of Naples, ſtretching into remoteſt diſtance, was ſpread out before her; when every mountain of that magnificent horizon, which encloſed her native landſcape, that country which ſhe believed Vivaldi to inhabit, ſtood unfolded, how affecting, how overwhelming were her ſenſations! Every object ſeemed to ſpeak of her home, of Vivaldi, and of happineſs that was paſſed! and ſo exquiſitely did regret mingle with hope, the tender grief of remembrance with the intereſt of expectation, that it were difficult to ſay which prevailed.

Her expreſſive countenance diſcloſed to the Confeſſor the courſe of her thoughts and of her feelings, feelings which, while

he

he contemned, he believed he perfectly comprehended, but of which, having never in any degree experienced them, he really underſtood nothing. The callous Schedoni, by a miſtake not uncommon, eſpecially to a mind of his order, ſubſtituted words for truths; not only confounding the limits of neighbouring qualities, but miſtaking their very principles. Incapable of perceiving their nice diſtinctions, he called the perſons who ſaw them, merely fanciful; thus making his very incapacity an argument for his ſuperior wiſdom. And, while he confounded delicacy of feeling with fatuity of mind, taſte with caprice, and imagination with error, he yielded, when he moſt congratulated himſelf on his ſagacity, to illuſions not leſs egregious becauſe they were leſs brilliant, than thoſe which are incident to ſentiment and feeling.

The better to eſcape obſervation, Schedoni had contrived to avoid reaching

Naples

Naples till the close of evening, and it was entirely dark before the carriage stopped at the gate of Villa-Altieri. Ellena, with a mixture of melancholy and satisfaction, viewed, once more, her long-deserted home, and while she waited till a servant should open the gate, remembered how often she had thus waited when there was a beloved friend within, to welcome her with smiles, which were now gone for ever. Beatrice, the old housekeeper, at length, however, appeared, and received her with an affection as sincere, if not as strong, as that of the relative for whom she mourned.

Here Schedoni alighted, and, having dismissed the carriage, entered the house, for the purpose of relinquishing also his disguise, and resuming his monk's habit. Before he departed, Ellena ventured to mention Vivaldi, and to express her wish to hear of his exact situation; but, though Schedoni was too well enabled to

in-

inform her of it, the policy which had hitherto kept him ſilent on this ſubject ſtill influenced him; and he replied only, that if he ſhould happen to learn the circumſtances of his condition, ſhe ſhould not remain ignorant of them.

This aſſurance revived Ellena, for two reaſons; it afforded her a hope of relief from her preſent uncertainty, and it alſo ſeemed to expreſs a degree of approbation of the object of her affection, ſuch as the Confeſſor had never yet diſcloſed. Schedoni added, that he ſhould ſee her no more, till he thought proper to acknowledge her for his daughter; but that, if circumſtances made it neceſſary, he ſhould, in the mean time, write to her; and he now gave her a direction by which to addreſs him under a fictitious name, and at a place remote from his convent. Ellena, though aſſured of the neceſſity for this conduct, could not yield to ſuch diſguiſe, without an averſion that was ſtrongly expreſſed

preſſed in her manner, but of which Schedoni took no notice. He bade her, as ſhe valued her exiſtence, watchfully to preſerve the ſecret of her birth; and to waſte not a ſingle day at Villa-Altieri, but to retire to *La Pieta*; and theſe injunctions were delivered in a manner ſo ſolemn and energetic, as not only deeply to impreſs upon her mind the neceſſity of fulfilling them, but to excite ſome degree of amazement.

After a ſhort and general direction reſpecting her further conduct, Schedoni bade her farewell, and, privately quitting the villa, in his eccleſiaſtical dreſs, repaired to the Dominican convent, which he entered as a brother returned from a diſtant pilgrimage. He was received as uſual by the ſociety, and found himſelf, once more the auſtere father Schedoni of the Spirito Santo.

The cauſe of his firſt anxiety was the neceſſity for juſtifying himſelf to the Marcheſa

cheſa di Vivaldi, for aſcertaining how much he might venture to reveal of the truth, and for eſtimating what would be her deciſion, were ſhe informed of the whole. His ſecond ſtep would be to obtain the releaſe of Vivaldi; and, as his conduct in this inſtance would be regulated, in a great degree, by the reſult of his conference with the Marcheſa, it would be *only* the ſecond. However painful it muſt be to Schedoni to meet her, now that he had diſcovered the depth of the guilt, in which ſhe would have involved him, he determined to ſeek this eventful conference on the following morning: and he paſſed this night partly in uneaſy expectation of the approaching day, but chiefly in inventing circumſtances and arranging arguments, that might bear him triumphantly towards the accompliſhment of his grand deſign.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

" Beneath the ſilent gloom of Solitude
Tho' peace can ſit and ſmile, tho' meek Content
Can keep the cheerful tenor of her ſoul,
Ev'n in the lonelieſt ſhades, yet let not Wrath
Approach, let black Revenge keep far aloof,
Or ſoon they flame to madneſs."

ELFRIDA.

SCHEDONI, on his way to the Vivaldi palace, again reviewed and arranged every argument, or rather ſpecious circumſtance, which might induce the Marcheſa's conſent to the nuptials he ſo much deſired. His family was noble, though no longer wealthy, and he believed that as the ſeeming want of deſcent had hitherto been the chief objection to Ellena, the Marcheſa might be prevailed with to overlook the wreck of his fortune.

At the palace he was told, that the Marcheſa was at one of her villas on the bay; and he was too anxious not to follow her thither immediately. This delightful reſidence was ſituated on an airy promontory, that overhung the water, and was nearly emboſomed among the woods, that ſpread far along the heights, and deſcended, with great pomp of foliage and colouring, to the very margin of the waves. It ſeemed ſcarcely poſſible that miſery could inhabit ſo enchanting an abode; yet the Marcheſa was wretched amidſt all theſe luxuries of nature and art, which would have perfected the happineſs of an innocent mind! Her heart was poſſeſſed by evil paſſions, and all her perceptions were diſtorted and diſcoloured by them, which, like a dark magician, had power to change the faireſt ſcenes into thoſe of gloom and deſolation.

The ſervants had orders to admit father Schedoni at all times, and he was ſhewn into

into a ſaloon in which the Marcheſa was alone. Every object in this apartment announced taſte, and even magnificence. The hangings were of purple and gold; the vaulted cieling was deſigned by one of the firſt painters of the Venetian ſchool; the marble ſtatues that adorned the receſſes were not leſs exquiſite, and the whole ſymmetry and architecture, airy, yet rich; gay, yet chaſtened; reſembled the palace of a fairy, and ſeemed to poſſeſs almoſt equal faſcinations. The lattices were thrown open, to admit the proſpect, as well as the air loaded with fragrance from an orangery, that ſpread before them. Lofty palms and plantains threw their green and refreſhing tint over the windows, and on the lawn that ſloped to the edge of the precipice, a ſhadowy perſpective, beyond which appeared the ample waters of the gulf, where the light ſails of feluccas, and the ſpreading canvas of larger veſſels, glided upon the ſcene,

and

and paſſed away, as in a camera obſcura. Veſuvius and the city of Naples were ſeen on the coaſt beyond, with many a bay and lofty cape of that long tract of bold and gaily-coloured ſcenery, which extends towards Cape Campanella, crowned by fading ranges of mountains, lighted up with all the magic of Italian ſunſhine. The Marcheſa reclined on a ſofa before an open lattice; her eyes were fixed upon the proſpect without, but her attention was wholly occupied by the viſions that evil paſſions painted to her imagination. On her ſtill beautiful features was the languor of diſcontent and indiſpoſition; and, though her manners, like her dreſs, diſplayed the elegant negligence of the graces, they concealed the movements of a careful, and even a tortured heart. On perceiving Schedoni, a faint ſmile lightened upon her countenance, and ſhe held forth her hand to him; at the touch of which he ſhuddered.

" My good father, I rejoice to ſee you," ſaid the Marcheſa; " I have felt the want of your converſation much, and at this moment of indiſpoſition eſpecially."

She waved to the attendant to withdraw; while Schedoni, ſtalking to a window, could with difficulty conceal the perturbation with which he now, for the firſt time, conſciouſly beheld the willing deſtroyer of his child. Some further compliment from the Marcheſa recalled him; he ſoon recovered all his addreſs, and, approaching her, ſaid,

" Daughter! you always ſend me away a worſe Dominican than I come; I approach you with humility, but depart elated with pride, and am obliged to ſuffer much from ſelf-infliction before I can deſcend to my proper level."

After ſome other flatteries had been exchanged, a ſilence of ſeveral moments followed, during which neither of the parties ſeemed to have ſufficient courage to

to introduce the ſubjects that engaged their thoughts, ſubjects upon which their intereſts were now ſo directly and unexpectedly oppoſite. Had Schedoni been leſs occupied by his own feelings, he might have perceived the extreme agitation of the Marcheſa, the tremor of her nerves, the faint fluſh that croſſed her cheek, the wanneſs that ſucceeded, the languid movement of her eyes, and the laborious ſighs that interrupted her breathing, while ſhe wiſhed, yet dared not aſk, whether Ellena was no more, and averted her regards from him, whom ſhe almoſt believed to be a murderer.

Schedoni, not leſs affected, though apparently tranquil, as ſedulouſly avoided the face of the Marcheſa, whom he conſidered with a degree of contempt almoſt equal to his indignation: his feelings had reverſed, for the preſent, all his opinions on the ſubject of their former arguments, and had taught him, for once, at leaſt,

to think juſtly. Every moment of ſilence increaſed his embarraſſment, and his reluctance even to name Ellena. He feared to tell that ſhe lived, yet deſpiſed himſelf for ſuffering ſuch fear, and ſhuddered at a recollection of the conduct, which had made any aſſurance concerning her life neceſſary. The inſinuation, that he had diſcovered her family to be ſuch as would not degrade that of the Marcheſa, he knew not how to introduce with ſuch delicacy of gradation as might win upon the jealouſy of her pride, and ſooth her diſappointment; and he was ſtill meditating how he could lead to this ſubject, when the Marcheſa herſelf broke the ſilence.

"Father," ſhe ſaid, with a ſigh, "I always look to you for conſolation, and am ſeldom diſappointed. You are too well acquainted with the anxiety which has long oppreſſed me: may I underſtand that the cauſe of it is removed?" She pauſed, and then added, "May I hope that

that my ſon will no longer be led from the obſervance of his duty?"

Schedoni, with his eyes fixed on the ground, remained ſilent, but, at length, ſaid, "The chief occaſion of your anxiety is certainly removed;"—and he was again ſilent.

"How!" exclaimed the Marcheſa, with the quick-ſightedneſs of ſuſpicion, while all her diſſimulation yielded to the urgency of her fear, "Have you failed? Is ſhe not dead?"

In the earneſtneſs of the queſtion, ſhe fixed her eyes on Schedoni's face, and, perceiving there ſymptoms of extraordinary emotion, added, "Relieve me from my apprehenſions, good father, I entreat; tell me that you have ſucceeded, and that ſhe has paid the debt of juſtice."

Schedoni raiſed his eyes to the Marcheſa, but inſtantly averted them; indignation had lifted them, and diſguſt and ſtifled horror turned them away. Though

very little of theſe ſeelings appeared, the Marcheſa perceived ſuch expreſſion as ſhe had never been accuſtomed to obſerve in his countenance; and, her ſurprize and impatience increaſing, ſhe repeated the queſtion, and with a yet more inſiſting air than before.

"I have not failed in the grand object," replied Schedoni: "your ſon is no longer in danger of forming a diſgraceful alliance."

"In what, then, have you failed?" aſked the Marcheſa; "for I perceive that you have not been completely ſucceſsful."

"I ought not to ſay that I have failed in any reſpect," replied Schedoni, with emotion, "ſince the honour of your houſe is preſerved, and —— a life is ſpared."

His voice faltered as he pronounced the laſt words, and he ſeemed to experience again the horror of that moment, when, with

with an upliſted poniard in his graſp, he had diſcovered Ellena for his daughter.

"Spared!" repeated the Marcheſa, doubtingly; "explain yourſelf, good father!"

"She lives," replied Schedoni; "but you have nothing, therefore, to apprehend."

The Marcheſa, ſurprized no leſs by the tone in which he ſpoke, than ſhocked at the purport of his words, changed countenance, while ſhe ſaid, impatiently—"You ſpeak in enigmas, father."

"Lady! I ſpeak plain truth—ſhe lives."

"I underſtand that ſufficiently," ſaid the Marcheſa;" "but when you tell me, I have nothing to apprehend——"

"I tell you truth, alſo," rejoined the Confeſſor; "and the benevolence of your nature may be permitted to rejoice, for juſtice no longer has forbidden the exerciſe of mercy."

"This is all very well in its place," ſaid the Marcheſa, betrayed by the vexa-

tion ſhe ſuffered; "ſuch ſentiments and ſuch compliments are, like gala ſuits, to be put on in fine weather. My day is cloudy; let me have a little plain ſenſe: inform me of the circumſtances, which have occaſioned this change in the courſe of your obſervations, and, good father! be brief."

Schedoni then unfolded, but with reſerve, and his uſual art, ſuch particulars relative to the family of Ellena as he hoped would ſoften the averſion of the Marcheſa to the connection, and incline her, in conſideration of her ſon's tranquillity, finally to approve it; with which diſcloſure he mingled a plauſible relation of the way in which the diſcovery had been made, without, however, betraying by the moſt diſtant hint how nearly this diſcovery affected himſelf.

The Marcheſa's patience would ſcarcely await the concluſion of his narrative, or her diſappointment ſubmit to the curb of

diſ-

discretion. When, at length, he had finished his history, "Is it possible," said she, with fretful displeasure, "that you have suffered yourself to be deceived by the plausibility of a girl, who might have been expected to utter any falsehood, which should appear likely to protect her! Has a man of your discernment given faith to the idle and improbable tale! Say, rather, father, that your resolution failed in the critical moment, and that you are now anxious to form excuses to yourself for a conduct so pusillanimous."

"I am not apt to give an easy faith to appearances," replied Schedoni, gravely, "and still less, to shrink from the performance of any act, which I judge to be necessary and just. To the last intimation, I make no reply; it does not become my character to vindicate myself from an implication of falsehood."

The Marchesa, perceiving that her passion had betrayed her into imprudence,

condeſcended to apologize for that, which ſhe termed an effect of her extreme anxiety, as to what might follow from an act of ſuch indiſcreet indulgence; and Schedoni as willingly accepted the apology, each believing the aſſiſtance of the other neceſſary to ſucceſs.

Schedoni then informed her, that he had better authority for what he had advanced than the aſſertion of Ellena; and he mentioned ſome circumſtances, which proved him to be more anxious for the reputation than the truth of his word. Believing that his origin was entirely unknown to the Marcheſa, he ventured to diſcloſe ſome further particulars of Ellena's family, without apprehending that it could lead to a ſuſpicion of his own.

The Marcheſa, though neither appeaſed or convinced, commanded her feelings ſo far as to appear tranquil, while the Confeſſor repreſented, with the moſt delicate addreſs, the unhappineſs of her ſon, and the

the ſatisfaction, which muſt finally reſult to herſelf from an acquieſcence with his choice, ſince the object of it was known to be worthy of his alliance. He added, that, while he had believed the contrary, he had proved himſelf as ſtrenuous to prevent, as he was now ſincere in approving their marriage; and concluded with gently blaming her for ſuffering prejudice and ſome remains of reſentment to obſcure her excellent underſtanding. "Truſting to the natural clearneſs of your perceptions, he added, "I doubt not that when you have maturely conſidered the ſubject, every objection will yield to a conſideration of your ſon's happineſs."

The earneſtneſs, with which Schedoni pleaded for Vivaldi, excited ſome ſurprize; but the Marcheſa, without condeſcending to reply either to his argument or remonſtrance, inquired whether Ellena had a ſuſpicion of the deſign, with which ſhe had been carried into the foreſt of the

Garganus, or concerning the identity of her perſecutor. Schedoni, immediately perceiving to what theſe queſtions tended, replied, with the facility with which he uſually accommodated his conſcience to his intereſt, that Ellena was totally ignorant as to who were her immediate perſecutors, and equally unſuſpicious of any other evil having been intended her, than that of a temporary confinement.

The laſt aſſertion was admitted by the Marcheſa to be probable, till the boldneſs of the firſt made her doubt the truth of each, and occaſioned her new ſurprize and conjecture as to the motive, which could induce Schedoni to venture theſe untruths. She then inquired where Ellena was now diſpoſed of, but he had too much prudence to diſcloſe the place of her retreat, however plauſible might be the air, with which the inquiry was urged; and he endeavoured to call off her attention to Vivaldi. The Confeſſor did not, however,

however, venture, at preſent, to give a hint as to the pretended diſcovery of his ſituation in the inquiſition, but reſerved to a more favourable opportunity ſuch mention, together with a zealous offer of his ſervices to extricate the priſoner. The Marcheſa, believing that her ſon was ſtill engaged in purſuit of Ellena, made many inquiries concerning him, but without expreſſing any ſolicitude for his welfare; reſentment appearing to be the only emotion ſhe retained towards him. While Schedoni replied with circumſpection to her queſtions, he urged inquiries of his own, as to the manner in which the Marcheſe endured the long abſence of Vivaldi; thus endeavouring to aſcertain how far he might hereafter venture to appear in any efforts for liberating him, and how ſhape his conduct reſpecting Ellena. It ſeemed that the Marcheſe was not indifferent as to his ſon's abſence; and, though he had at firſt believed the ſearch for

Ellena

Ellena to have occaſioned it, other apprehenſions now diſturbed him, and taught him the feelings of a father. His numerous avocations and intereſts, however, ſeemed to prevent ſuch anxiety from preying upon his mind; and, having diſmiſſed perſons in ſearch of Vivaldi, he paſſed his time in the uſual routine of company and the court. Of the actual ſituation of his ſon it was evident that neither he, nor the Marcheſa, had the leaſt apprehenſion, and this was a circumſtance, which the Confeſſor was very careful to aſcertain.

Before he took leave, he ventured to renew the mention of Vivaldi's attachment, and gently to plead for him. The Marcheſa, however, ſeemed inattentive to what he repreſented, till, at length, awaking from her reverie, ſhe ſaid—"Father, you have judged ill——," and, before ſhe concluded the ſentence, ſhe relapſed again into thoughtful ſilence. Believing

lieving that he anticipated her meaning, Schedoni began to repeat his own juſtification reſpecting his conduct towards Ellena.

"You have judged erroneouſly, "father," reſumed the Marcheſa, with the ſame conſidering air, "in placing the girl in ſuch a ſituation; my ſon cannot fail to diſcover her there."

"Or wherever ſhe may be," replied the Confeſſor, believing that he underſtood the Marcheſa's aim. "It may not be poſſible to conceal her long from his ſearch."

"The neighbourhood of Naples ought at leaſt to have been avoided," obſerved the Marcheſa.

Schedoni was ſilent, and ſhe added, "So near, alſo, to his own reſidence! How far is *La Pieta* from the Vivaldi palace?"

Though Schedoni had thought that the Marcheſa, while diſplaying a pretended knowledge of Ellena's retreat, was only endeavouring to obtain a real one, this

mention

mention of the place of her actual reſidence ſtartled him; but he replied almoſt immediately, "I am ignorant of the diſtance, for, till now, I was unacquainted that there is a convent of the name you mention. It appears, however, that *La Pieta* is the place of all other, which ought to have been avoided. How could you ſuſpect me, lady, of imprudence thus extravagant!"

While Schedoni ſpoke, the Marcheſa regarded him attentively, and then replied, "I may be allowed, good father, to ſuſpect you of indiſcretion in this inſtance, ſince you have juſt given me ſo unequivocal a proof of it in another."

She would then have changed the ſubject, but Schedoni, believing this inclination to be the conſequence of her having aſſured herſelf, that ſhe had actually diſcovered Ellena's aſylum, and too reaſonably ſuſpecting the dreadful uſe ſhe deſigned to make of the diſcovery, endeavoured

voured to unſettle her opinion, and miſlead her as to the place of Ellena's abode. He not only contradicted the fact of her preſent reſidence at *La Pieta*, but, without ſcruple, made a poſitive aſſertion, that ſhe was at a diſtance from Naples, naming, at the ſame time, a fictitious place, whoſe obſcurity, he added, would be the beſt protection from the purſuit of Vivaldi.

"Very true, father," obſerved the Marcheſa; "I believe that my ſon will not readily diſcover the girl in the place you have named."

Whether the Marcheſa believed Schedoni's aſſertion or not, ſhe expreſſed no further curioſity on the ſubject, and appeared conſiderably more tranquil than before. She now chatted with eaſe on general topics, while the Confeſſor dared no more to urge the ſubject of his ſecret wiſhes; and, having ſupported, for ſome time, a converſation moſt diſſonant with his temper, he took his leave, and returned

to

to Naples. On the way thither, he reviewed, with exactneſs, the late behaviour of the Marcheſa, and the reſult of this examination was a reſolution—never to renew the ſubject of their converſation, but to ſolemnize, without her conſent, the nuptials of Vivaldi and Ellena.

The Marcheſa, meanwhile, on the departure of Schedoni, remained, for ſome time, in the very attitude, in which he had left her, and abſorbed by the intereſt, which his viſit excited. The ſudden change in his conduct no leſs aſtoniſhed and perplexed, than diſappointed her. She could not explain it by the ſuppoſition of any principle, or motive. Sometimes it occurred to her, that Vivaldi had bribed him with rich promiſes to promote the marriage, which he contributed to thwart; but, when ſhe conſidered the high expectations ſhe had herſelf encouraged him to cheriſh, the improbability of the conjecture was apparent. That Schedoni, from whatever cauſe,

was

was no longer to be truſted in this buſineſs, was ſufficiently clear, but ſhe endeavoured to conſole herſelf with a hope that a confidential perſon might yet be diſcovered. A part of Schedoni's reſolution ſhe alſo adopted, which was, never again to introduce the ſubject of their late interview. But, while ſhe ſhould ſilently purſue her own plans, ſhe determined to conduct herſelf towards the Confeſſor in every other reſpect, as uſual, not ſuffering him to ſuſpect that ſhe had withrawn her confidence, but inducing him to believe that ſhe had relinquiſhed all further deſign againſt Ellena.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

"We
Would learn the private virtues; how to glide
Through ſhades and plains, along the ſmootheſt ſtream
Of rural life; or, ſnatch'd away by hope,
Through the dim ſpaces of futurity,
With earneſt eye anticipate thoſe ſcenes
Of happineſs and wonder, where the mind,
In endleſs growth and infinite aſcent,
Riſes from ſtate to ſtate, and world to world."

THOMSON.

ELLENA, obedient to the command of Schedoni, withdrew from her home on the day that followed her arrival there, to *La Pieta*. The Superiour, who had known her from her infancy, and, from the acquaintance which ſuch long obſervation afforded, both eſteemed and loved her, received Ellena with a degree of ſatisfaction proportionate to the concern ſhe had ſuffered

ſuffered when informed of her diſaſtrous removal from Villa-Altieri.

Among the quiet groves of this convent, however, Ellena vainly endeavoured to moderate her ſolicitude reſpecting the ſituation of Vivaldi; for, now that ſhe had a reſpite from immediate calamity, ſhe thought with more intenſe anxiety as to what might be his ſufferings, and her fears and impatience increaſed, as each day diſappointed her expectation of intelligence from Schedoni.

If the ſoothings of ſympathy and the delicate arts of benevolence could have reſtored the ſerenity of her mind, Ellena would now have been peaceful; for all theſe were offered her by the abbeſs and the ſiſters of the *Santa della Pieta.* They were not acquainted with the cauſe of her ſorrow, but they perceived that ſhe was unhappy, and wiſhed her to be otherwiſe. The ſociety of *Our Lady of Pity*, was ſuch as a convent does not often ſhroud; to the wiſdom and virtue of the Superiour the

the ſiſterhood was principally indebted for the harmony and happineſs, which diſtinguiſhed them. This lady was a ſhining example to governeſſes of religious houſes, and a ſtriking inſtance of the influence, which a virtuous mind may acquire over others, as well as of the extenſive good that it may thus diffuſe. She was dignified without haughtineſs, religious without bigotry, and mild, though deciſive and firm. She poſſeſſed penetration to diſcover what was juſt, reſolution to adhere to it, and temper to practiſe it with gentleneſs and grace; ſo that even correction from her, aſſumed the winning air of courteſy: the perſon, whom ſhe admoniſhed, wept in ſorrow for the offence, inſtead of being ſecretly irritated by the reproof, and loved her as a mother, rather than feared her as a judge. Whatever might be her failings, they were effectually concealed by the general benevolence of her heart, and the harmony of her mind;

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a harmony, not the effect of torpid feelings, but the accompliſhment of correct and vigilant judgment. Her religion was neither gloomy nor bigotted; it was the ſentiment of a grateful heart offering itſelf up to a Deity, who delights in the happineſs of his creatures; and ſhe conformed to the cuſtoms of the Roman church, without ſuppoſing a faith in all of them to be neceſſary to ſalvation. This opinion, however, ſhe was obliged to conceal, leſt her very virtue ſhould draw upon her the puniſhment of a crime, from ſome fierce eccleſiaſtics, who contradicted in their practice the very eſſential principles, which the chriſtianity they profeſſed would have taught them.

In her lectures to the nuns ſhe ſeldom touched upon points of faith, but explained and enforced the moral duties, particularly ſuch as were moſt practicable in the ſociety to which ſhe belonged; ſuch as tended to ſoften and harmonize the af-

ſections, to impart that repoſe of mind, which perſuades to the practice of ſiſterly kindneſs, univerſal charity, and the moſt pure and elevated devotion. When ſhe ſpoke of religion, it appeared ſo intereſting, ſo beautiful, that her attentive auditors, revered and loved it as a friend, a refiner of the heart, a ſublime conſoler; and exprienced ſomewhat of the meek and holy ardour, which may belong to angelic natures.

The ſociety appeared like a large family, of which the lady abbeſs was the mother, rather than an aſſemblage of ſtrangers; and particularly when gathered around her, they liſtened to the evening ſermon, which ſhe delivered with ſuch affectionate intereſt, ſuch perſuaſive eloquence, and ſometimes with ſuch pathetic energy, as few hearts could reſiſt.

She encouraged in her convent every innocent and liberal purſuit, which might ſweeten the auſterities of confinement,

and

and which were generally rendered inſtrumental to charity. The *Daughters of Pity* particularly excelled in muſic; not in thoſe difficulties of the art, which diſplay florid graces, and intricate execution, but in ſuch eloquence of ſound as ſteals upon the heart, and awakens its ſweeteſt and beſt affections. It was probably the well regulated ſenſibility of their own minds, that enabled theſe ſiſters to diffuſe through their ſtrains a character of ſuch finely-tempered taſte, as drew crowds of viſitors, on every feſtival, to the church of the *Santa della Pieta.*

The local circumſtances of this convent were ſcarcely leſs agreeable than the harmony of its ſociety was intereſting. Theſe extenſive domains included olive-grounds, vineyards, and ſome corn-land; a conſiderable tract was devoted to the pleaſures of the garden, whoſe groves ſupplied walnuts, almonds, oranges, and citrons, in abundance, and almoſt every kind of

fruit and flower, which this luxurious climate nurtured. Theſe gardens hung upon the ſlope of a hill, about a mile within the ſhore, and afforded extenſive views of the country round Naples, and of the gulf. But from the terraces, which extended along a ſemicircular range of rocks, that roſe over the convent, and formed a part of the domain, the proſpects were infinitely finer. They extended on the ſouth to the iſle of Capri, where the gulf expands into the ſea; in the weſt, appeared the iſland of Iſchia, diſtinguiſhed by the white pinnacles of the lofty mountain Epomeo; and near it Procida, with its many-coloured cliffs, roſe out of the waves. Overlooking ſeveral points towards Puzzuoli, the eye caught beyond other promontories, and others further ſtill, to the north, a glimpſe of the ſea, that bathes the now deſolate ſhores of Baiæ; with Capua, and all the towns and villas, that ſpeckle the garden-plains between Caſerta and Naples.

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In the nearer ſcene were the rocky heights of Pauſilippo, and Naples itſelf, with all its crowded ſuburbs aſcending among the hills, and mingling with vineyards and overtopping cypreſs; the caſtle of San Elmo, conſpicuous on its rock, overhanging the magnificent monaſtery of the Chartreux; while in the ſcene below appeared the *Caſtel Nuovo*, with its cluſtered towers, the long-extended Corſo, the mole, with its tall pharos, and the harbour gay with painted ſhipping, buſy with veſſels of all nations continually arriving and departing, and full to the brim with the blue waters of the bay. Beyond the hills of Naples, the whole horizon to the north and eaſt was bounded by the mountains of the Appenine, an amphitheatre proportioned to the grandeur of the plain, which the gulf ſpread out below.

These terraces, ſhaded with acacias and plane-trees, were the favourite haunt of Ellena. Between the opening branches,

ſhe looked down upon Villa-Altieri, which brought to her remembrance the affectionate Bianchi, with all the ſportive years of her childhood, and where ſome of her happieſt hours had been paſſed in the ſociety of Vivaldi. Along the windings of the coaſt, too, ſhe could diſtinguiſh many places rendered ſacred by affection, to which ſhe had made excurſions with her lamented relative, and Vivaldi; and, though ſadneſs mingled with the recollections a view of them reſtored, they were precious to her heart. Here, alone, and unobſerved, ſhe frequently yielded to the melancholy which ſhe endeavoured to ſuppreſs in ſociety; and at other times tried to deceive, with books and the pencil, the lingering moments of uncertainty concerning the ſtate of Vivaldi; for day after day ſtill elapſed without bringing any intelligence from Schedoni. Whenever the late ſcenes connected with the diſcovery of her family recurred to Ellena, ſhe was

ſtruck

ſtruck with almoſt as much amazement as if ſhe was gazing upon a viſion, inſtead of recalling realities. Contraſted with the ſober truth of her preſent life, the paſt appeared like romance; and there were moments when ſhe ſhrunk from the relationſhip of Schedoni with unconquerable affright. The firſt emotions his appearance had excited were ſo oppoſite to thoſe of filial tenderneſs, that ſhe percived it was now nearly impoſſible to love and revere him as her father, and ſhe endeavoured, by dwelling upon all the obligations, which ſhe believed he had lately conferred upon her, to repay him in gratitude, what was withheld in affection.

In ſuch melancholy conſiderations, ſhe often lingered under the ſhade of the acacias, till the ſun had ſunk behind the far-diſtant promontory of Miſeno, and the laſt bell of veſpers ſummoned her to the convent below.

Among the nuns, Ellena had many favourites, but not one that ſhe admired

and loved equally with Olivia of San Stefano, the remembrance of whom was always accompanied with a fear leſt ſhe ſhould have ſuffered from her generous compaſſion, and a wiſh that ſhe had taken up her abode with the happy ſociety of the *Daughters of Pity*, inſtead of being ſubjected to the tyranny of the abbeſs of San Stefano. To Ellena, the magnificent ſcenes of *La Pieta* ſeemed to open a ſecure, and, perhaps, a laſt aſylum ; for, in her preſent circumſtances, ſhe could not avoid perceiving how menacing and various were the objections to her marriage with Vivaldi, even ſhould Schedoni prove propitious to it. The character of the Marcheſa di Vivaldi, ſuch as it ſtood unfolded by the late occurrences, ſtruck her with diſmay, for her deſigns appeared ſufficiently atrocious, whether they had extended to the utmoſt limit of Ellena's ſuſpicions, or had ſtopped where the affected charity of Schedoni had pointed out.

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In either caſe, the pertinacity of her averſion, and the vindictive violence of her nature, were obvious.

In this view of her character, however, it was not the inconvenience threatened to thoſe who might become connected with her, that principally affected Ellena, but the circumſtance of ſuch a woman being the mother of Vivaldi; and, to alleviate ſo afflicting a conſideration, ſhe endeavoured to believe all the palliating ſuggeſtions of Schedoni, reſpecting the Marcheſa's late intentions. But if Ellena was grieved on diſcovering crime in the character of Vivaldi's parent, what would have been her ſuffering, had ſhe ſuſpected the nature of Schedoni?—what, if ſhe had been told that he was the adviſer of the Marcheſa's plans?—if ſhe had known that he had been the partner of her intentional guilt? From ſuch ſuffering ſhe was yet ſpared, as well as from that, which a knowledge of Vivaldi's preſent ſituation, and of

the reſult of Schedoni's efforts to procure a releaſe from the perils, among which he had precipitated him, would have inflicted. Had ſhe known this, it is poſſible that in the firſt deſpondency of her mind, ſhe would have relinquiſhed what is called the world, and ſought a laſting aſylum with the ſociety of the holy ſiſters. Even as it was, ſhe ſometimes endeavoured to look with reſignation upon the events which might render ſuch a ſtep deſirable; but it was an effort that ſeldom ſoothed her even with a temporary ſelf-deluſion. Should the veil, however, prove her final refuge, it would be by her own choice; for the lady abbeſs of *La Pieta* employed no art to win a recluſe, nor ſuffered the nuns to ſeduce votaries to the order.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

" Sullen and ſad to fancy's frighted eye
Did ſhapes of dun and murky hue advance,
In train tumultuous, all of geſture ſtrange,
And paſſing horrible."

CARACTACUS.

WHILE the late events had been paſſing in the Garganus, and at Naples, Vivaldi and his ſervant Paulo remained impriſoned in diſtinct chambers of the Inquiſition. They were again ſeparately interrogated. From the ſervant no information could be obtained; he aſſerted only his maſter's innocence, without once remembering to mention his own, clamoured, with more juſtneſs than prudence, againſt the perſons who had occaſioned his arreſt; and ſeriouſly endeavouring to convince the inquiſitors, that he himſelf had *no other motive* in having demanded to

be brought to theſe priſons than that he might comfort his maſter, he gravely remonſtrated on the injuſtice of ſeparating them, adding, that he was ſure when they knew the rights of the matter, they would order him to be carried to the priſon of Signor Vivaldi.

"I do aſſure your *Sereniſſimo Illuſtriſſimo*," continued Paulo, addreſſing the chief inquiſitor with profound gravity, "that this is the laſt place I ſhould have thought of coming to, on any other account; and if you will only condeſcend to aſk your officials, who took my maſter up, they will tell you *as good.* They knew well enough all along, what I came here for, and if they had known it would be all in vain, it would have been but civil of them to have told me as much, and not have brought me; for this is the laſt place in the world I would have come to, otherwiſe, of my own accord."

Paulo was permitted to harangue in his own way, becauſe his examiners hoped that

that his prolixity would be a means of betraying circumſtances connected with his maſter. By this view, however, they were miſled, for Paulo, with all his ſimplicity of heart, was both vigilant and ſhrewd in Vivaldi's intereſt. But, when he perceived them really convinced, that his ſole motive for viſiting the Inquiſition was that he might conſole his maſter, yet ſtill perſiſting in the reſolution of ſeparately confining him, his indignation knew no bounds. He deſpiſed alike their reprehenſion, their thundering menaces, and their more artful exhibitions; told them of all they had to expect both here and hereafter, for their cruelty to his dear maſter, and ſaid they might do what they would with him; he defied them to make him more miſerable than he was.

It was not without difficulty that he was removed from the chamber; where he left his examiners in a ſtate of aſtoniſhment at his raſhneſs, and indignation of

his honeſty, ſuch as they had, probably, never experienced before.

When Vivaldi was again called up to the table of the Holy Office, he underwent a longer examination than on a former occaſion. Several inquiſitors attended, and every art was employed to induce him to confeſs crimes, of which he was ſuſpected, and to draw from him a diſcovery of others, which might have eluded even ſuſpicion. Still the examiners cautiouſly avoided informing him of the ſubject of the accuſation on which he had been arreſted, and it was, therefore, only on the former aſſurances of the Benedictine, and the officials in the chapel of San Sebaſtian, that Vivaldi underſtood he was accuſed of having carried off a nun. His anſwers on the preſent occaſion were conciſe and firm, and his whole deportment undaunted. He felt leſs apprehenſion for himſelf, than indignation of the general injuſtice and cruelty, which the tribunal was permitted

to

to exerciſe upon others; and this virtuous indignation gave a loftineſs, a calm heroic grandeur to his mind, which never, for a moment, forſook him, except when he conjectured what might be the ſufferings of Ellena. Then, his fortitude and magnanimity failed, and his tortured ſpirit roſe almoſt to frenzy.

On this, his ſecond examination, he was urged by the ſame dark queſtions, and replied to them with the ſame open ſincerity, as during the firſt. Yet the ſimplicity and energy of truth failed to impreſs conviction on minds, which, no longer poſſeſſing the virtue themſelves, were not competent to underſtand the ſymptoms of it in others. Vivaldi was again threatened with the torture, and again diſmiſſed to his priſon.

On the way to this dreadful abode, a perſon paſſed him in one of the avenues, of whoſe air and figure he thought he had ſome recollection; and, as the ſtranger

ſtalked

ſtalked away, he ſuddenly knew him to be the prophetic monk, who had haunted the ruins of Paluzzi. In the firſt moment of ſurprize, Vivaldi loſt his preſence of mind ſo far, that he made no attempt to interrupt him. In the next inſtant, however, he pauſed and looked back, with an intention of ſpeaking; but this myſterious perſon was already at the extremity of the avenue. Vivaldi however called, and beſought him to ſtop; when, without either ſpeaking or turning his head, he immediately diſappeared beyond a door that opened at his approach. Vivaldi, on attempting to take the way of the monk, was withheld by his guards, and, when he inquired who was the ſtranger he had ſeen, the officials aſked, in their turn, what ſtranger he alluded to.

"He who has juſt paſſed us," replied Vivaldi.

The officials ſeemed ſurprized, "Your ſpirits are diſordered, Signor," obſerved one of them, "I ſaw no perſon paſs!"

"He

"He paſſed ſo cloſely," ſaid Vivaldi, "that it was hardly poſſible you could avoid ſeeing him!"

"I did not even hear a footſtep!" added the man.

"I do not recollect that I did," anſwered Vivaldi, "but I ſaw his figure as plainly as I now ſee your's; his black garments almoſt touched me! Was he an inquiſitor?"

The official appeared aſtoniſhed; and, whether his incredulity was real, or affected for the purpoſe of concealing his knowledge of the perſon alluded to, his embarraſſment and awe ſeemed natural. Vivaldi obſerved, with almoſt equal curioſity and ſurprize, the fear which his face expreſſed; but perceived alſo, that it would avail nothing to repeat his queſtions.

As they proceeded along the avenue, a kind of half-ſtifled groan was ſometimes audible from a diſtance. "Whence come thoſe ſounds?" ſaid Vivaldi, "they ſtrike to my heart!"

"They

"They ſhould do ſo," replied the guard.

"Whence come they?" repeated Vivaldi, more impatiently, and ſhuddering.

"From the place of torture," ſaid the official.

"O God! O God!" exclaimed Vivaldi, with a deep groan.

He paſſed with haſty ſteps the door of that terrible chamber, and the guard did not attempt to ſtop him. The officials had brought him, in obedience to the cuſtomary orders they had received, within hearing of thoſe doleful ſounds, for the purpoſe of impreſſing upon his mind the horrors of the puniſhment, with which he was threatened, and of inducing him to confeſs without incurring them.

On this ſame evening, Vivaldi was viſited, in his priſon, by a man whom he had never conſciouſly ſeen before. He appeared to be between forty and fifty; was of a grave and obſervant phyſiognomy.

nomy, and of manners, which, though ſomewhat auſtere, were not alarming. The account he gave of himſelf, and of his motive for this viſit, was curious. He ſaid that he alſo was a priſoner in the inquiſition, but, as the ground of accuſation againſt him was light, he had been favoured ſo far as to be allowed ſome degree of liberty within certain bounds; that, having heard of Vivaldi's ſituation, he had aſked and obtained leave to converſe with him, which he had done in compaſſion, and with a deſire of aſſuaging his ſufferings, ſo far as an expreſſion of ſympathy and commiſeration might relieve them.

While he ſpoke, Vivaldi regarded him with deep attention, and the improbability that theſe pretenſions ſhould be true, did not eſcape him; but the ſuſpicion which they occaſioned he prudently concealed. The ſtranger converſed on various ſubjects. Vivaldi's anſwers were cautious and conciſe; but not even long pauſes of

ſilence wearied the compaſſionate patience of his viſitor. Among other topics he, at length, introduced that of religion.

"I have, myſelf, been accuſed of hereſy," ſaid he, "and know how to pity others in the ſame ſituation."

"It is of hereſy, then, that I am accuſed!" obſerved Vivaldi, "of hereſy!"

"It availed me nothing that I aſſerted my innocence," continued the ſtranger, without noticing Vivaldi's exclamation, "I was condemned to the torture. My ſufferings were too terrible to be endured! I confeſſed my offence ——"

"Pardon me," interrupted Vivaldi, "but allow me to remark, that ſince your ſufferings were ſo ſevere, your's, againſt whom the ground of accuſation was light, what may be the puniſhment of thoſe, whoſe offences are more ſerious?"

The ſtranger was ſomewhat embarraſſed. "My offence was ſlight," he continued, without giving a full anſwer.

"Is

"Is it poſſible," ſaid Vivaldi, again interrupting him, "that hereſy can be conſidered as a ſlight offence before the tribunal of the Inquiſition?"

"It was only of a ſlight degree of hereſy," replied the viſitor, reddening with diſpleaſure, "of which I was ſuſpected, and ——"

"Does then the Inquiſition allow of degrees in hereſy?" ſaid Vivaldi.

"I confeſſed my offence," added the ſtranger with a louder emphaſis, "and the conſequence of this confeſſion was a remiſſion of puniſhment. After a trifling penance I ſhall be diſmiſſed, and probably, in a few days, leave the priſon. Before I left it, I was deſirous of adminiſtering ſome degree of conſolation to a fellow ſufferer; if you have any friends whom you wiſh to inform of your ſituation, do not fear to confide their names and your meſſage to me."

The latter part of the ſpeech was delivered in a low voice, as if the ſtranger feared

feared to be overheard. Vivaldi remained ſilent, while he examined, with cloſer attention, the countenance of his viſitor. It was of the utmoſt importance to him, that his family ſhould be made acquainted with his ſituation; yet he knew not exactly how to interpret, or to confide in this offer. Vivaldi had heard that informers ſometimes viſited the priſoners, and, under the affectation of kindneſs and ſympathy, drew from them a confeſſion of opinions, which were afterwards urged againſt them; and obtained diſcoveries relative to their connections and friends, who were, by theſe inſidious means, frequently involved in their deſtruction. Vivaldi, conſcious of his own innocence, had, on his firſt examination, acquainted the inquiſitor with the names and reſidence of his family; he had, therefore, nothing new to apprehend from revealing them to this ſtranger; but he perceived that if it ſhould be known he had attempted to con-

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vey a meſſage, however conciſe and harmleſs, the diſcovery would irritate the jealous inquiſitors againſt him, and might be urged as a new preſumption of his guilt. Theſe conſiderations, together with the diſtruſt which the inconſiſtency of his viſitor's aſſertions, and the occaſional embarraſſment of his manner, had excited, determined Vivaldi to reſiſt the temptation now offered to him; and the ſtranger, having received his thanks, reluctantly withdrew, obſerving, however, that ſhould any unforeſeen circumſtance detain him in the Inquiſition longer than he had reaſon to expect, he ſhould beg leave to pay him another viſit. In reply to this, Vivaldi only bowed, but he remarked that the ſtranger's countenance altered, and that ſome dark brooding appeared to cloud his mind, as he quitted the chamber.

Several days elapſed, during which Vivaldi heard no more of his new acquaintance. He was then ſummoned to another exami-

examination, from which he was diſmiſſed as before; and ſome weeks of ſolitude and of heavy uncertainty ſucceeded, after which he was a fourth time called up to the table of the Holy Office. It was then ſurrounded by inquiſitors, and a more than uſual ſolemnity appeared in the proceedings.

As proofs of Vivaldi's innocence had not been obtained, the ſuſpicions of his examiners, of courſe, were not removed; and, as he perſiſted in denying the truth of the charge which he underſtood would be exhibited againſt him, and refuſed to make any confeſſion of crimes, it was ordered that he ſhould, within three hours, be put to the *queſtion*. Till then, Vivaldi was once more diſmiſſed to his priſon-chamber. His reſolution remained unſhaken, but he could not look, unmoved, upon the horrors which might be preparing for him. The interval of expectation between the ſentence and the accompliſh-

ment of this preliminary puniſhment, was, indeed, dreadful. The ſeeming ignominy of his ſituation, and his ignorance as to the degree of torture to be applied, overcame the calmneſs he had before exhibited, and as he paced his cell, cold damps, which hung upon his forehead, betrayed the agony of his mind. It was not long, however, that he ſuffered from a ſenſe of ignominy; his better judgment ſhewed him, that innocence cannot ſuffer diſgrace from any ſituation or circumſtance, and he once more reſumed the courage and the firmneſs which belong to virtue.

It was about midnight, that Vivaldi heard ſteps approaching, and a murmur of voices at the door of his cell. He underſtood by theſe that perſons were coming to ſummon him to the torture. The door was unbarred, and two men, habited in black, appeared at it. Without ſpeaking, they advanced, and throwing over him a ſingular kind of mantle, led him from the chamber.

Along

Along the galleries, and other avenues through which they paſſed, not any perſon was ſeen, and, by the profound ſtillneſs that reigned, it ſeemed as if death had already anticipated his work in theſe regions of horror, and had condemned alike the tortured and the torturer.

They deſcended to the large hall, where Vivaldi had waited on the night of his entrance, and thence through an avenue, and down a long flight of ſteps, that led to ſubterranean chambers. His conductors did not utter a ſyllable during the whole progreſs; Vivaldi knew too well that queſtions would only ſubject him to greater ſeverity, and he aſked none.

The doors, through which they paſſed, regularly opened at the touch of an iron rod, carried by one of the officials, and without the appearance of any perſon. The other man bore a torch, and the paſſages were ſo dimly lighted that the way could ſcarcely have been found without

 one.

one. They croſſed what ſeemed to be a burial vault, but the extent and obſcurity of the place did not allow it to be aſcertained; and, having reached an iron door, they ſtopped. One of the officials ſtruck upon it three times with the rod, but it did not open as the others had done. While they waited, Vivaldi thought he heard, from within, low intermitting ſounds, as of perſons in their laſt extremity, but, though within, they appeared to come from a diſtance. His whole heart was chilled, not with fear, for at that moment he did not remember himſelf, but with horror.

Having waited a conſiderable time, during which the official did not repeat the ſignal, the door was partly opened by a figure, whom Vivaldi could not diſtinguiſh in the gloom beyond, and with whom one of his conductors communicated by ſigns; after which the door was cloſed.

Several minutes had elapſed, when tones of deep voices arouſed the attention of Vivaldi. They were loud and hoarſe, and ſpoke in a language unknown to him. At the ſounds, the official immediately extinguiſhed his torch. The voices drew nearer, and, the door again unfolding, two figures ſtood before Vivaldi, which, ſhewn by a glimmering light within, ſtruck him with aſtoniſhment and diſmay. They were clothed like his conductors, in black, but in a different faſhion, for their habits were made cloſe to the ſhape. Their faces were entirely concealed beneath a very peculiar kind of cowl, which deſcended from the head to the feet; and their eyes only were viſible through ſmall openings contrived for the ſight. It occurred to Vivaldi that theſe men were torturers; their appearance was worthy of demons. Probably they were thus habited, that the perſons, whom they afflicted, might not know them; or, perhaps, it was only

only for the purpoſe of ſtriking terror upon the minds of the accuſed, and thus compelling them to confeſs without further difficulty. Whatever motive might have occaſioned their horrific appearance, and whatever was their office, Vivaldi was delivered into their hands, and in the ſame moment heard the iron door ſhut, which encloſed him with them in a narrow paſſage, gloomily lighted by a lamp ſuſpended from the arched roof. They walked in ſilence on each ſide of their priſoner, and came to a ſecond door, which admitted them inſtantly into another paſſage. A third door, at a ſhort diſtance, admitted them to a third avenue, at the end of which one of his myſterious guides ſtruck upon a gate, and they ſtopped. The uncertain ſounds that Vivaldi had fancied he heard, were now more audible, and he diſtinguiſhed, with inexpreſſible horror, that they were uttered by perſons ſuffering.

The gate was, at length, opened by a figure habited like his conductors, and two

other doors of iron, placed very near each other, being alſo unlocked, Vivaldi found himſelf in a ſpacious chamber, the walls of which were hung with black, duſkily lighted by lamps, that gleamed in the lofty vault. Immediately on his entrance, a ſtrange ſound ran along the walls, and echoed among other vaults, that appeared, by the progreſs of the ſound, to extend far beyond this.

It was not immediately that Vivaldi could ſufficiently recollect himſelf to obſerve any object before him; and, even when he did ſo, the gloom of the place prevented his aſcertaining many appearances. Shadowy countenances and uncertain forms ſeemed to flit through the duſk, and many inſtruments, the application of which he did not comprehend, ſtruck him with horrible ſuſpicions. Still he heard, at intervals, half-ſuppreſſed groans, and was looking round to diſcover the wretched people, from whom they were extorted, when a voice from a remote part of the chamber called on him to advance.

The

The diſtance, and the obſcurity of the ſpot whence the voice iſſued, had prevented Vivaldi from noticing any perſon there, and he was now ſlowly obeying, when, on a ſecond ſummons, his conductors ſeized his arms, and hurried him forward.

In a remote part of this extenſive chamber, he perceived three perſons ſeated under a black canopy, on chairs raiſed ſeveral ſteps from the floor, and who appeared to preſide there in the office of either judges or examiners, or directors of the puniſhments. Below, at a table, ſat a ſecretary, over whom was ſuſpended the only lamp, that could enable him to commit to paper what ſhould occur during the examination. Vivaldi now underſtood that the three perſons who compoſed the tribunal were the vicar-general, or grand inquiſitor, the advocate of the exchequer, and an ordinary inquiſitor, who was ſeated between the other two, and who appeared more eagerly to engage in the duties of his cruel office. A portentous

obſcurity enveloped alike their perſons and their proceedings.

At ſome diſtance from the tribunal ſtood a large iron frame, which Vivaldi conjectured to be the rack, and near it another, reſembling, in ſhape, a coffin, but, happily, he could not diſtinguiſh, through the remote obſcurity, any perſon undergoing actual ſuffering. In the vaults beyond, however, the diabolical decrees of the inquiſitors ſeemed to be fulfilling; for, whenever a diſtant door opened for a moment, ſounds of lamentation iſſued forth, and men, whom he judged to be familiars, habited like thoſe, who ſtood beſide him, were ſeen paſſing to and fro within.

Vivaldi almoſt believed himſelf in the infernal regions; the diſmal aſpect of this place, the horrible preparation for puniſhment, and, above all, the diſpoſition and appearance of the perſons that were ready to inflict it, confirmed the reſemblance. That any human being ſhould willingly

afflict

afflict a fellow being, who had never injured, or even offended him; that, unſwayed by paſſion, he ſhould deliberately become the means of torturing him, appeared to Vivaldi nearly incredible! But, when he looked at the three perſons who compoſed the tribunal, and conſidered that they had not only voluntarily undertaken the cruel office they fulfilled, but had probably long regarded it as the ſummit of their ambition, his aſtoniſhment and indignation were unbounded.

The grand inquiſitor, having again called on Vivaldi by name, admoniſhed him to confeſs the truth, and avoid the ſuffering that awaited him.

As Vivaldi had on former examinations ſpoken the truth, which was not believed, he had no chance of eſcaping preſent ſuffering, but by aſſerting falſehood: in doing ſo, to avoid ſuch monſtrous injuſtice and cruelty, he might, perhaps, have been juſtified, had it been certain that ſuch aſſer-

tion could affect himſelf alone; but ſince he knew that the conſequence muſt extend to others, and, above all, believed that Ellena di Roſalba muſt be involved in it, he did not heſitate for an inſtant to dare whatever torture his firmneſs might provoke. But even if morality could have forgiven falſehood in ſuch extraordinary circumſtances as theſe, policy, after all, would have forbidden it, ſince a diſcovery of the artifice would probably have led to the final deſtruction of the accuſed perſon.

Of Ellena's ſituation he would now have aſked, however deſperate the queſtion; would again have aſſerted her innocence, and ſupplicated for compaſſion, even to inquiſitors, had he not perceived that, in doing ſo, he ſhould only furniſh them with a more exquiſite means of torturing him than any other they could apply; for if, when all the terrors of his ſoul concerning her were underſtood, they ſhould threaten to encreaſe her ſufferings,

as

as the puniſhment of what was termed his obſtinacy, they would, indeed, become the maſters of his integrity, as well as of his perſon.

The tribunal again, and repeatedly, urged Vivaldi to confeſs himſelf guilty; and the inquiſitor, at length, concluded with ſaying, that the judges were innocent of whatever conſequence might enſue from his obſtinacy; ſo that, if he expired beneath his ſufferings, himſelf only, not they, would have occaſioned his death.

"I am innocent of the charges, which I underſtand are urged againſt me," ſaid Vivaldi, with ſolemnity; "I repeat, that I am innocent! If, to eſcape the horrors of theſe moments, I could be weak enough to declare myſelf guilty, not all your racks could alter truth, and make me ſo, except in that aſſertion. The conſequence of your your tortures, therefore, be upon your own heads!"

While Vivaldi ſpoke, the vicar-general liſtened with attention, and, when he

had ceaſed to ſpeak, appeared to meditate; but the inquiſitor was irritated by the boldneſs of his ſpeech, inſtead of being convinced by the juſtneſs of his repreſentation; and made a ſignal for the officers to prepare for the *queſtion*. While they were obeying, Vivaldi obſerved, notwithſtanding the agitation he ſuffered, a perſon croſs the chamber, whom he immediately knew to be the ſame that had paſſed him in the avenue of the inquiſition on a former night, and whom he had then fancied to be the myſterious ſtranger of Paluzzi. Vivaldi now fixed his eyes upon him, but his own peculiar ſituation prevented his feeling the intereſt he had formerly ſuffered concerning him.

The figure, air, and ſtalk, of this perſon were ſo ſtriking, and ſo ſtrongly reſembled thoſe of the monk of Paluzzi, that Vivaldi had no longer a doubt as to their identity. He pointed him out to one of the officials, and inquired who he was.

While

While he ſpoke, the ſtranger was paſſing forward, and, before any reply was given, a door leading to the further vaults ſhut him from view. Vivaldi, however, repeated the inquiry, which the official appeared unable to anſwer, and a reproof from the tribunal, reminded him that he muſt not aſk queſtions there. Vivaldi obſerved that it was the grand inquiſitor who ſpoke, and that the manner of the official immediately changed.

The familiars, who were the ſame that had conducted Vivaldi into the chamber, having made ready the inſtrument of torture, approached him, and, after taking off his cloak and veſt, bound him with ſtrong cords. They threw over his head the cuſtomary black garment, which entirely enveloped his figure, and prevented his obſerving what was further preparing. In this ſtate of expectation, he was again interrogated by the inquiſitor.

"Was you ever in the church of the Spirito Santo, at Naples?" ſaid he.

"Yes,"

" Yes," replied Vivaldi.

" Did you ever expreſs there a contempt of the Catholic faith ?"

" Never," ſaid Vivaldi.

" Neither by word or action ?" continued the inquiſitor.

" Never, by either !"

" Recollect yourſelf," added the inquiſitor. " Did you never inſult there a miniſter of our moſt holy church ?"

Vivaldi was ſilent : he began to perceive the real nature of the charge which was to be urged againſt him, and that it was too plauſible to permit his eſcape from the puniſhment, which is adjudged for hereſy. Queſtions ſo direct and minute had never yet been put to him ; they had been reſerved for a moment when it was believed he could not evade them ; and the real charge had been concealed from him, that he might not be prepared to elude it.

" Anſwer !" repeated the inquiſitor.— " Did you ever inſult a miniſter of the Catholic

Catholic faith, in the church of the Spirito Santo, at Naples?"

"Did you not insult him while he was performing an act of holy penance?" said another voice.

Vivaldi started, for he instantly recollected the well-known tones of the monk of Paluzzi. "Who asks the question?" demanded Vivaldi.

"It is you who are to answer here," resumed the inquisitor. "Answer to what I have required."

"I have offended a minister of the church," replied Vivaldi, "but never could intentionally insult our holy religion. You are not acquainted, fathers, with the injuries that provoked——"

"Enough!" interrupted the inquisitor; "speak to the question. Did you not, by insult and menace, force a pious brother to leave unperformed the act of penance, in which he had engaged himself? Did you not compel him to quit the church, and fly for refuge to his convent?"

"No,"

"No," replied Vivaldi. "'Tis true, he left the church, and that in conſequence of my conduct there; but the conſequence was not neceſſary; if he had only replied to my inquiry, or promiſed to reſtore her of whom he had treacherouſly robbed me, he might have remained quietly in the church till this moment, had that depended upon my forbearance."

"What!" ſaid the vicar-general, "would you have compelled him to ſpeak, when he was engaged in ſilent penance? You confeſs, that you occaſioned him to leave the church. That is enough."

"Where did you firſt ſee Ellena di Roſalba?" ſaid the voice, which had ſpoken once before.

"I demand again, who gives the queſtion," anſwered Vivaldi.

"Recollect yourſelf," ſaid the inquiſitor, "a criminal may not make a demand."

"I do not perceive the connection between your admonition and your aſſertion," obſerved Vivaldi.

"You

"You appear to be rather too much at your eaſe," ſaid the inquiſitor. "Anſwer to the queſtion which was laſt put to you, or the familiars ſhall do their duty."

"Let the ſame perſon aſk it," replied Vivaldi.

The queſtion was repeated in the former voice.

"In the church of San Lorenzo, at Naples," rejoined Vivaldi, with a heavy ſigh, "I firſt beheld Ellena di Roſalba."

"Was ſhe then profeſſed?" aſked the vicar-general.

"She never accepted the veil," replied Vivaldi, "nor ever intended to do ſo."

"Where did ſhe reſide at that period?"

"She lived with a relative at Villa-Altieri, and would yet reſide there, had not the machinations of a monk occaſioned her to be torn from her home, and confined in a convent, from which I had juſt aſſiſted to releaſe her, when ſhe was again ſeized, and upon a charge moſt falſe and cruel,

cruel.—O reverend fathers! I conjure, I ſupplicate——" Vivaldi reſtrained himſelf, for he was betraying to the inquiſitors, all the feelings of his heart.

"The name of the monk?" ſaid the ſtranger, earneſtly.

"If I miſtake not," replied Vivaldi, "you are already acquainted with it. The monk is called father Schedoni. He is of the Dominican convent of the Spirito Santo, in Naples, the ſame who accuſes me of having inſulted him in the church of that name."

"How did you know him for your accuſer?" aſked the ſame voice.

"Becauſe he is my only enemy," replied Vivaldi.

"Your enemy!" obſerved the inquiſitor; "a former depoſition ſays, you were unconſcious of having one! You are inconſiſtent in your replies."

"You were warned not to viſit Villa-Altieri," ſaid the unknown perſon. "Why did you not profit by the warning?"

"I was

"I was warned by yourſelf," anſwered Vivaldi. "Now I know you well."

"By me!" ſaid the ſtranger, in a ſolemn tone.

"By you!" repeated Vivaldi: "you, who alſo foretold the death of Signora Bianchi; and you are that enemy—that father Schedoni, by whom I am accuſed."

"Whence come theſe queſtions?" demanded the vicar-general. "Who has been authoriſed thus to interrogate the priſoner?"

No reply was made. A buſy hum of voices from the tribunal ſucceeded the ſilence. At length, the murmuring ſubſided, and the monk's voice was heard again.

"I will declare thus much," it ſaid, addreſſing Vivaldi; "I am not father Schedoni."

The peculiar tone and emphaſis, with which this was delivered, more than the aſſertion itſelf, perſuaded Vivaldi that the

the ſtranger ſpoke truth; and, though he ſtill recognized the voice of the monk of Paluzzi, he did not know it to be that of Schedoni. Vivaldi was aſtoniſhed! He would have torn the veil from his eyes, and once more viewed this myſterious ſtranger, had his hands been at liberty. As it was, he could only conjure him to reveal his name, and the motives for his former conduct.

"Who is come amongſt us?" ſaid the vicar-general, in the voice of a perſon, who means to inſpire others with the awe he himſelf ſuffers.

"Who is come amongſt us?" he repeated, in a louder tone. Still no anſwer was returned; but again a confuſed murmur ſounded from the tribunal, and a general conſternation ſeemed to prevail. No perſon ſpoke with ſufficient pre-eminence to be underſtood by Vivaldi; ſomething extraordinary appeared to be paſſing, and he waited the iſſue with all the patience

tience he could command. Soon after he heard doors opened, and the noiſe of people quitting the chamber. A deep ſilence followed; but he was certain that the familiars were ſtill beſide him, waiting to begin their work of torture.

After a conſiderable time had elapſed, Vivaldi heard footſteps advancing, and a perſon give orders for his releaſe, that he might be carried back to his cell.

When the veil was removed from his eyes, he perceived that the tribunal was diſſolved, and that the ſtranger was gone. The lamps were dying away, and the chamber appeared more gloomily terrific than before.

The familiars conducted him to the ſpot at which they had received him; whence the officers who had led him thither, guarded him to his priſon. There, ſtretched upon his bed of ſtraw, in ſolitude and in darkneſs, he had leiſure enough to reflect upon what had paſſed, and to recollect

with

with minute exactneſs every former circumſtance connected with the ſtranger. By comparing thoſe with the preſent, he endeavoured to draw a more certain concluſion as to the identity of this perſon, and his motives for the very extraordinary conduct he had purſued. The firſt appearance of this ſtranger among the ruins of Paluzzi, when he had ſaid that Vivaldi's ſteps were watched, and had cautioned him againſt returning to Villa-Altieri, was recalled to his mind. Vivaldi reconſidered, alſo, his ſecond appearance on the ſame ſpot, and his ſecond warning; the circumſtances, which had attended his own adventures within the fortreſs,—the monk's prediction of Bianchi's death, and his evil tidings reſpecting Ellena, at the very hour when ſhe had been ſeized and carried from her home. The longer he conſidered theſe ſeveral inſtances, as they were now connected in his mind, with the certainty of Schedoni's evil diſpoſition towards

towards him, the more he was inclined to believe, notwithſtanding the voice of ſeeming truth, which had juſt affirmed the contrary, that the unknown perſon was Schedoni himſelf, and that he had been employed by the Marcheſa, to prevent Vivaldi's viſits to Villa-Altieri. Being thus an agent in the events of which he had warned Vivaldi, he was too well enabled to predict them. Vivaldi pauſed upon the remembrance of Signora Bianchi's death; he conſidered the extraordinary and dubious circumſtances that had attended it, and ſhuddered as a new conjecture croſſed his mind.—The thought was too dreadful to be permitted, and he diſmiſſed it inſtantly.

Of the converſation, however, which he had afterwards held with the Confeſſor in the Marcheſa's cabinet, he recollected many particulars, that ſerved to renew his doubts as to the identity of the ſtranger; the behaviour of Schedoni when he was obliquely

obliquely challenged for the monk of Paluzzi, ſtill appeared that of a man unconſcious of diſguiſe; and above all, Vivaldi was ſtruck with the ſeeming candour of his having pointed out a circumſtance, which removed the probability that the ſtranger was a brother of the *Santa del Pianto*.

Some particulars, alſo, of the ſtranger's conduct did not agree with what might have been expected from Schedoni, even though the Confeſſor had really been Vivaldi's enemy; a circumſtance which the latter was no longer permitted to doubt. Nor did thoſe particular circumſtances accord, as he was inclined to believe, with the manner of a being of this world; and, when Vivaldi conſidered the ſuddenneſs and myſtery with which the ſtranger had always appeared and retired, he felt diſpoſed to adopt again one of his earlieſt conjectures, which undoubtedly the horrors of his preſent abode

diſpoſed his imagination to admit, as thoſe of his former ſituation in the vaults of Paluzzi, together with a youthful glow of curioſity concerning the marvellous, had before contributed to impreſs them upon his mind.

He concluded his preſent reflections as he had began them—in doubt and perplexity; but at length found a reſpite from thought and from ſuffering in ſleep.

Midnight had been paſſed in the vaults of the Inquiſition; but it was probably not yet two o'clock, when he was imperfectly awakened by a ſound, which he fancied proceeded from within his chamber. He raiſed himſelf to diſcover what had occaſioned the noiſe; it was, however, impoſſible to diſcern any object, for all was dark, but he liſtened for a return of the ſound. The wind only was heard moaning among the inner buildings of the priſon, and Vivaldi concluded, that his dream had mocked him with a mimic voice.

Satisfied

Satisfied with this concluſion, he again laid his head on his pillow of ſtraw, and ſoon ſunk into a ſlumber. The ſubject of his waking thoughts ſtill haunted his imagination, and the ſtranger, whoſe voice he had this night recognized as that of the prophet of Paluzzi, appeared before him. Vivaldi, on perceiving the figure of this unknown, felt, perhaps, nearly the ſame degrees of awe, curioſity, and impatience, that he would have ſuffered, had he beheld the ſubſtance of this ſhadow. The monk, whoſe face was ſtill ſhrouded, he thought advanced, till, having come within a few paces of Vivaldi, he pauſed, and, lifting the awful cowl that had hitherto concealed him, diſcloſed—not the countenance of Schedoni, but one which Vivaldi did not recollect ever having ſeen before! It was not leſs intereſting to curioſity than ſtriking to the feelings. Vivaldi at the firſt glance ſhrunk back;—ſomething of that ſtrange and indeſcribable air, which

we attach to the idea of a ſupernatural being, prevailed over the features; and the intenſe and fiery eyes reſembled thoſe of an evil ſpirit rather than of a human haracter. He drew a poniard from beeath a fold of his garment, and, as he iſplayed it, pointed with a ſtern frown to he ſpots which diſcoloured the blade; Vivaldi perceived they were of blood! He urned away his eyes in horror, and, when he again looked round in his dream, the figure was gone.

A groan awakened him, but what were his feelings, when, on looking up, he perceived the ſame figure ſtanding before him! It was not, however, immediately that he could convince himſelf the appearance was more than the phantom of his dream, ſtrongly impreſſed upon an alarmed fancy. The voice of the monk, for his face was as uſual concealed, recalled Vivaldi from his error; but his emotion cannot eaſily be conceived, when the ſtranger,

ſlowly lifting that myſterious cowl, diſcovered to him the ſame awful countenance, which had characteriſed the viſion in his ſlumber. Unable to inquire the occaſion of this appearance, Vivaldi gazed in aſtoniſhment and terror, and did not immediately obſerve, that, inſtead of a dagger, the monk held a lamp, which gleamed over every deep furrow of his features, yet left their ſhadowy markings to hint the paſſions and the hiſtory of an extraordinary life.

"You are ſpared for this night," ſaid the ſtranger, "but for to-morrow"——he pauſed.

"In the name of all that is moſt ſacred," ſaid Vivaldi, endeavouring to recollect his thoughts, "who are you, and what is your errand?"

"Aſk no queſtions," replied the monk, ſolemnly;—"but anſwer *me*."

Vivaldi was ſtruck by the tone with which he ſaid this, and dared not to urge the inquiry at the preſent moment.

"How

"How long have you known father Schedoni?" continued the ſtranger, "Where did you firſt meet?

"I have known him about two years, as my mother's confeſſor," replied Vivaldi. "I firſt ſaw him in a corridor of the Vivaldi palace; it was evening, and he was returning from the Marcheſa's cloſet."

"Are you certain as to this?" ſaid the monk, with peculiar emphaſis. "It is of conſequence that you ſhould be ſo."

"I am certain," repeated Vivaldi.

"It is ſtrange," obſerved the monk, after a pauſe, "that a circumſtance, which muſt have appeared trivial to you at the moment, ſhould have left ſo ſtrong a mark on your memory! In two years we have time to forget many things!" He ſighed as he ſpoke.

"I remember the circumſtance," ſaid Vivaldi, "becauſe I was ſtruck with his appearance; the evening was far advanced —it was duſk, and he came upon me ſuddenly. His voice ſtartled me; as he paſſed

he ſaid to himſelf—" It is for veſpers." At the ſame time I heard the bell of the Spirito Santo."

" Do you know who he is?" reſumed the ſtranger, ſolemnly.

" I know only what he appears to be," replied Vivaldi.

" Did you never hear any report of his paſt life?"

" Never," anſwered Vivaldi.

" Never any thing extraordinary concerning him," added the monk.

Vivaldi pauſed a moment; for he now recollected the obſcure and imperfect ſtory which Paulo had related while they were confined in the dungeon of Paluzzi, reſpecting a confeſſion made in the church of the Black Penitents; but he could not preſume to affirm that it concerned Schedoni. He remembered alſo the monk's garments, ſtained with blood, which he had diſcovered in the vaults of that fort. The conduct of the myſterious being, who now

now ſtood before him, with many other particulars of his own adventures there, paſſed like a viſion over his memory. His mind reſembled the glaſs of a magician, on which the apparitions of long-buried events ariſe, and, as they fleet away, point portentouſly to ſhapes half veiled in the duſkineſs of futurity. An unuſual dread ſeized upon him; and a ſuperſtition, ſuch as he had never before admitted in an equal degree, uſurped his judgment. He looked up to the ſhadowy countenance of the ſtranger; and almoſt believed he beheld an inhabitant of the world of ſpirits.

The monk ſpoke again, repeating in a ſeverer tone, "Did you never hear any thing extraordinary concerning father Schedoni?"

"Is it reaſonable," ſaid Vivaldi, recollecting his courage, "that I ſhould anſwer the queſtions, the minute queſtions, of a perſon who refuſes to tell me even his name?"

"My name is paſſed away—it is no more remembered," replied the ſtranger, turning from Vivaldi,—"I leave you to your fate."

"What fate?" aſked Vivaldi, "and what is the purpoſe of this viſit? I conjure you, in the tremendous name of the Inquiſition, to ſay!"

"You will know full ſoon; have mercy on yourſelf!"

"What fate?" repeated Vivaldi.

"Urge me no further," ſaid the ſtranger; "but anſwer to what I ſhall demand. Schedoni——"

"I have told all that I certainly know concerning him," interrupted Vivaldi, "the reſt is only conjecture."

"What is that conjecture? Does it relate to a confeſſion made in the church of the Black Penitents of the Santa Maria del Pianto?"

"It does!" replied Vivaldi with ſurpriſe.

"What

"What was that confeſſion?"

"I know not," anſwered Vivaldi.

"Declare the truth," ſaid the ſtranger, ſternly.

"A confeſſion," replied Vivaldi, "is ſacred, and forever buried in the boſom of the prieſt to whom it is made. How, then, is it to be ſuppoſed, that I can be acquainted with the ſubject of this?"

"Did you never hear, that father Schedoni had been guilty of great crimes, which he endeavours to eraſe from his conſcience by the ſeverity of penance?"

"Never!" ſaid Vivaldi.

"Did you never hear that he had a wife —a brother?"

"Never!"

"Nor the means he uſed—no hint of—murder, of—"

The ſtranger pauſed, as if he wiſhed Vivaldi to fill up his meaning; Vivaldi was ſilent and aghaſt.

"You know nothing then, of Schedoni,"

doni," reſumed the monk after a deep pauſe—" nothing of his paſt life?

" Nothing, except what I have mentioned," replied Vivaldi.

" Then liſten to what I ſhall unfold!" continued the monk, with ſolemnity. " To-morrow night you will be again carried to the place of torture; you will be taken to a chamber beyond that in which you were this night. You will there witneſs many extraordinary things, of which you have not now any ſuſpicion. Be not diſmayed; I ſhall be there, though, perhaps, not viſible."

" Not viſible." exclaimed Vivaldi.

" Interrupt me not, but liſten.—When you are aſked of father Schedoni, ſay—that he has lived for fifteen years in the diſguiſe of a monk, a member of the Dominicans of the Spirito Santo, at Naples. When you are aſked who he is, reply—Ferando Count di Bruno. You will be aſked the motive for ſuch diſguiſe. In

reply

reply to this, refer them to the *Black Penitents* of the Santa Maria del Pianto, near that city; bid the inquiſitors ſummon before their tribunal one father Anſaldo di Rovalli, the grand penitentiary of the ſociety, and command him to divulge the crimes confeſſed to him in the year 1752, on the evening of the twenty fourth of April, which was then the vigil of San Marco, in a confeſſional of the Santa del Pianto."

"It is probable he may have forgotten ſuch confeſſion, at this diſtance of time," obſerved Vivaldi.

"Fear not but he will remember," replied the ſtrauger.

"But will his conſcience ſuffer him to betray the ſecrets of a confeſſion?" ſaid Vivaldi.

"The tribunal command, and his conſcience is abſolved," anſwered the monk, "He may not refuſe to obey! You are further to direct your examiners to ſum-

mon father Schedoni, to anſwer for the crimes which Anſaldo ſhall reveal." The monk pauſed, and ſeemed waiting the reply of Vivaldi, who, after a momentary conſideration, ſaid,

"How can I do all this, and upon the inſtigation of a ſtranger! Neither conſcience nor prudence will ſuffer me to aſſert what I cannot prove. It is true that I have reaſon to believe Schedoni is my bitter enemy, but I will not be unjuſt even to him. I have no proof that he is the Count di Bruno, nor that he is the perpetrator of the crimes you allude to, whatever thoſe may be; and I will not be made an inſtrument to ſummon any man before a tribunal, where innocence is no protection from ignominy, and where ſuſpicion alone may inflict death."

"You doubt, then, the truth of what I aſſert?" ſaid the monk, in a haughty tone.

"Can I believe that of which I have no proof?" replied Vivaldi.

"Yes,

"Yes, there are caſes which do not admit of proof; under your peculiar circumſtances, this is one of them; you can act only upon aſſertion. I atteſt," continued the monk, raiſing his hollow voice to a tone of ſingular ſolemnity, "I atteſt the powers which are beyond this earth to witneſs to the truth of what I have delivered!"

As the ſtranger uttered this adjuration, Vivaldi obſerved, with emotion, the extraordinary expreſſion of his eyes: Vivaldi's preſence of mind, however, did not forſake him, and, in the next moment, he ſaid, "But who is he that thus atteſts? It is upon the aſſertion of a ſtranger that I am to rely, in defect of proof! It is a ſtranger who calls upon me to bring ſolemn charges againſt a man, of whoſe guilt I know nothing!"

"You are not required to bring charges, you are only to ſummon him who will."

"I ſhould ſtill aſſiſt in bringing forward accuſations, which may be founded

in error," replied Vivaldi. "If you ar convinced of their truth, why do not you ſummon Anſaldo yourſelf!"

"I ſhall do more," ſaid the monk.

"But why not ſummon alſo?" urged Vivaldi.

"I ſhall *appear*," ſaid the ſtranger, with emphaſis.

Vivaldi, though ſomewhat awed by the manner, which accompanied theſe words, ſtill urged his inquiries, "As a witneſs?" ſaid he.

"Aye, as a dreadful witneſs!" replied the monk.

"But may not a witneſs ſummon perſons before the tribunal of the inquiſition?" continued Vivaldi, falteringly.

"He may."

"Why then," obſerved Vivaldi, "am I, a ſtranger to you, called upon to do that which you could perform yourſelf?"

"Aſk no further," rejoined the monk, "but anſwer, whether you will deliver the ſummons?"

"The

"The charges, which muſt follow," replied Vivaldi, "appear to be of a nature too ſolemn to juſtify my promoting them. I reſign the taſk to you."

"When *I* ſummon," ſaid the ſtranger, "*you* ſhall obey!"

Vivaldi, again awed by his manner, again juſtified his refuſal, and concluded with repeating his ſurprize, that he ſhould be required to aſſiſt in this myſterious affair, "Since I neither know you, father," he added, "nor the Penitentiary Anſaldo, whom you bid me admoniſh to appear."

"You ſhall know me hereafter," ſaid the ſtranger, frowningly; and he drew from beneath his garment a dagger!

Vivaldi remembered his dream.

"Mark thoſe ſpots," ſaid the monk.

Vivaldi looked, and beheld blood!

"This blood, added the ſtranger, pointing to the blade, "would have ſaved your's! Here, at leaſt, is ſome print of truth! To-morrow night you will meet me in the chambers of death!"

As

As he ſpoke, he turned away; and, before Vivaldi had recovered from his conſternation, the light diſappeared. Vivaldi knew that the ſtranger had quitted the priſon, only by the ſilence which prevailed there.

He remained ſunk in thought, till, at the dawn of day, the man, on watch, unfaſtened the door of his cell, and brought, as uſual, a jug of water, and ſome bread. Vivaldi inquired the name of the ſtranger who had viſited him in the night. The centinel looked ſurprized, and Vivaldi repeated the queſtion before he could obtain an anſwer.

"I have been on guard ſince the firſt hour," ſaid the man, "and no perſon, in that time, has paſſed through this door!"

Vivaldi regarded the centinel with attention, while he made this aſſertion, and did not perceive in his manner any conſciouſneſs of falſehood; yet he knew not how to believe what he had affirmed. "Did you

you hear no noiſe, either?" ſaid Vivaldi. "Has all been ſilent during the night?"

"I have heard only the bell of San Dominico ſtrike upon the hour," replied the man, "and the watch word of the centinels."

"This is incomprehenſible!" exclaimed Vivaldi, "What! no footſteps, no voice?"

The man ſmiled contemptuouſly.—"None, but of the centinels," he replied.

"How can you be certain you heard only the centinel's, friend," added Vivaldi.

"They ſpeak only to paſs the watch-word, and the claſh of their arms is heard at the ſame time."

"But their footſteps!—how are they diſtinguiſhed from thoſe of other perſons?"

"By the heavineſs of their tread; our ſandals are braced with iron. But why theſe queſtions, Signor?"

"You have kept guard at the door of this chamber?" ſaid Vivaldi.

"Yes, Signor."

"And you have not once heard, during the

the whole night, a voice from within it ?"

" None, Signor."

" Fear nothing from diſcovery, friend; confeſs that you have ſlumbered."

" I had a comrade," replied the centinel, angrily, " has he, too, ſlumbered ! and if he had, how could admittance be obtained without our keys ?"

" And thoſe might eaſily have been procured, friend, if you were overcome with ſleep. You may rely upon my promiſe of ſecrecy."

" What !" ſaid the man, " have I kept guard for three years in the Inquiſition, to be ſuſpected by an heretic of neglecting my duty ?"

" If you were ſuſpected by an heretic," replied Vivaldi, " you ought to conſole yourſelf by recollecting that his opinions are conſidered to be erroneous."

" We were watchful every minute of the night," added the centinel, going.

" This is incomprehenſible !" ſaid Vivaldi,

valdi, "By what means could the ſtranger have entered my priſon?"

"Signor, you ſtill dream!" replied the centinel, pauſing, "No perſon has been here."

"*Still* dream!" repeated Vivaldi, "how do you know that I have dreamed at all?" His mind deeply affected by the extraordinary circumſtances of the dream, and the yet more extraordinary incident that had followed, Vivaldi gave a meaning to the words of the centinel, which did not belong to them.

"When people ſleep, they are apt to dream," replied the man, drily. "I ſuppoſe *you* had ſlept, Signor."

"A perſon, habited like a monk, came to me in the night," reſumed Vivaldi, and he deſcribed the appearance of the ſtranger. The centinel, while he liſtened, became grave and thoughtful.

"Do you know any perſon reſembling the one I have mentioned," ſaid Vivaldi.

"No!"

"No!" replied the guard.

"Though you have not ſeen him enter my priſon," continued Vivaldi, "you may, perhaps, recollect ſuch a perſon, as an inhabitant of the Inquiſition."

"San Dominico forbid!"

Vivaldi, ſurprized at this exclamation, inquired the reaſon for it.

"I know him not," replied the centinel, with emotion, and he abruptly left the priſon. Whatever conſideration might occaſion this ſudden departure, his aſſertion that he had been for three years a guard of the Inquiſition could ſcarcely be credited, ſince he had held ſo long a dialogue with a priſoner, and was, apparently, inſenſible of the danger he incurred by ſo doing.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

——"Is it not dead midnight?
Cold fearful drops ſtand on my trembling fleſh.
What do I fear?"

SHAKESPEARE.

AT about the ſame hour, as on the preceding night, Vivaldi heard perſons approaching his priſon, and, the door unfolding, his former conductors appeared. They threw over him the ſame mantle as before, and, in addition, a black veil, that completely muffled his eyes; after which, they led him from the chamber. Vivaldi heard the door ſhut, on his departure, and the centinels followed his ſteps, as if their duty was finiſhed, and he was to return thither no more. At this moment, he remembered the words of the ſtranger when he had diſplayed the po-

poniard, and Vivaldi apprehended the worſt, from having thwarted the deſigns of a perſon apparently ſo malignant: but he exulted in the rectitude which had preſerved him from debaſement, and, with the magnanimous enthuſiaſm of virtue, he almoſt welcomed ſufferings which would prove the firmneſs of his juſtice towards an enemy; for he determined to brave every thing, rather than impute to Schedoni circumſtances, the truth of which he poſſeſſed no means of aſcertaining.

While Vivaldi was conducted, as on the preceding night, through many paſſages, he endeavoured to diſcover, by their length, and the abruptneſs of their turnings, whether they were the ſame he had traverſed before. Suddenly, one of his conductors cried "Steps!" It was the firſt words Vivaldi had ever heard him utter. He immediately perceived that the ground ſunk, and he began to deſcend;

as

as he did which, he tried to count the number of the ſteps, that he might form ſome judgment whether this was the flight he had paſſed before. When he had reached the bottom, he inclined to believe that it was not ſo; and the care which had been obſerved in blinding him, ſeemed to indicate that he was going to ſome new place.

He paſſed through ſeveral avenues, and then aſended; ſoon after which, he again deſcended a very long ſtair-caſe, ſuch as he had not any remembrance of, and they paſſed over a conſiderable extent of level ground. By the hollow ſound which his ſteps returned, he judged that he was walking over vaults. The footſteps of the centinels who had followed from the cell were no longer heard, and he ſeemed to be left with his conductors only. A ſecond flight appeared to lead him into ſubterraneous chambers, for he perceived the air change, and felt a damp vapour wrap round

round him. The menace of the monk, that he ſhould meet him in the chambers of death, frequently occurred to Vivaldi.

His conductors ſtopped in this vault, and ſeemed to hold a conſultation, but they ſpoke in ſuch low accents, that their words were not diſtinguiſhable, except a few unconnected ones, that hinted of more than Vivaldi could comprehend. He was, at length, again led forward; and ſoon after, he heard the heavy grating of hinges, and perceived that he was paſſing through ſeveral doors, by the ſituation of which judging they were the ſame he had entered the night before, he concluded, that he was going to the hall of the tribunal.

His conductors ſtopped again, and Vivaldi heard the iron rod ſtrike three times upon a door; immediately a ſtrange voice ſpoke from within, and the door was uncloſed. He paſſed on, and imagined that he was admitted into a ſpacious

cious vault; for the air was freer, and his ſteps ſounded to a diſtance.

Preſently, a voice, as on the preceding night, ſummoned him to come forward, and Vivaldi underſtood that he was again before the tribunal. It was the voice of the inquiſitor, who had been his chief examiner.

You, Vincentio di Vivaldi," it ſaid, "anſwer to your name, and to the queſtions which ſhall be put to you, without equivocation, on pain of the torture."

As the monk had predicted, Vivaldi was aſked what he knew of father Schedoni, and, when he replied, as he had formerly done to his myſterious viſitor, he was told that he knew more than he acknowledged.

"I *know* no more," replied Vivaldi.

"You equivocate," ſaid the inquiſitor. "Declare what you have heard, and remember that you formerly took an oath to that purpoſe."

Vivaldi was ſilent, till a tremendous voice from the tribunal commanded him to reſpect his oath.

"I do reſpect it," ſaid Vivaldi; "and I conjure you to believe that I alſo reſpect truth, when I declare, that what I am going to relate, is a report to which I give no confidence, and concerning even the probability of which I cannot produce the ſmalleſt proof."

"Reſpect truth!" ſaid another voice from the tribunal, and Vivaldi fancied he diſtinguiſhed the tones of the monk. He pauſed a moment, and the exhortation was repeated. Vivaldi then related what the ſtranger had ſaid concerning the family of Schedoni, and the diſguiſe which the father had aſſumed in the convent of the Spirito Santo; but forbore even to name the penitentiary Anſaldo, and any circumſtance connected with the extraordinary confeſſion. Vivaldi concluded, with again declaring, that he had

had not ſufficient authority to juſtify a belief in thoſe reports.

"On what authority do you repeat them?" ſaid the vicar-general.

Vivaldi was ſilent.

"On what authority?" inquired the inquiſitor.

Vivaldi, after a momentary heſitation, replied, "What I am about to declare, holy fathers, is ſo extraordinary——"

"Tremble!" ſaid a voice cloſe to his ear, which he inſtantly knew to be the monk's, and the ſuddenneſs of which electrified him. He was unable to conclude the ſentence.

"What is your authority for the reports?" demanded the inquiſitor.

"It is unknown, even to myſelf!" anſwered Vivaldi.

"Do not equivocate!" ſaid the vicar-general.

"I ſolemnly proteſt," rejoined Vivaldi, "that I know not either the name

or the condition of my informer, and that I never even beheld his face, till the period when he ſpoke of father Schedoni."

"Tremble!" repeated the ſame low, but emphatic voice in his ear. Vivaldi ſtarted, and turned involuntarily towards the ſound, though his eyes could not aſſiſt his curioſity.

"You did well to ſay, that you had ſomething extraordinary to add," obſerved the inquiſitor. "'Tis evident, alſo, that you expected ſomething extraordinary from your judges, ſince you ſuppoſed they would credit theſe aſſertions."

Vivaldi was too proud to attempt the juſtifying himſelf againſt ſo groſs an accuſation, or to make any reply.

"Why do you not ſummon father Anſaldo!" ſaid the voice. "Remember my words!"

Vivaldi, again awed by the voice, heſitated, for an inſtant, how to act, and in that inſtant his courage returned.

"My

"My informer ſtands beſide me!" ſaid Vivaldi, boldly; "I know his voice! Detain him; it is of conſequence."

"Whoſe voice?" demanded the inquiſitor. "No perſon ſpoke but myſelf!"

"Whoſe voice?" ſaid the vicar-general.

"The voice was cloſe beſide me," replied Vivaldi. "It ſpoke low, but I knew it well."

"This is either the cunning, or the frenzy of deſpair!" obſerved the vicar-general.

"Not any perſon is now beſide you, except the familiars," ſaid the inquiſitor, "and they wait to do their office, if you ſhall refuſe to anſwer the queſtions put to you."

"I perſiſt in my aſſertion," replied Vivaldi; "and I ſupplicate that my eyes may be unbound, that I may know my enemy."

The tribunal, after a long private conſultation, granted the requeſt; the veil

was withdrawn, and Vivaldi perceived beſide him—only the familiars! Their faces, as is uſual, were concealed. It appeared that one of theſe torturers muſt be the myſterious enemy, who purſued him, if, indeed, that enemy was an inhabitant of the earth! and Vivaldi requeſted that they might be ordered to uncover their features. He was ſternly rebuked for ſo preſumptuous a requiſition, and reminded of the inviolable law and faith, which the tribunal had pledged, that perſons appointed to their awful office ſhould never be expoſed to the revenge of the criminal, whom it might be their duty to puniſh.

"Their duty!" exclaimed Vivaldi, thrown from his guard by ſtrong indignation. "And is faith held ſacred with demons!"

Without awaiting the order of the tribunal, the familiars immediately covered Vivaldi's face with the veil, and he felt him-

himſelf again in their graſp. He endeavoured, however, to diſentangle his hands, and, at length, ſhook theſe men from their hold, and again unveiled his eyes; but the familiars were inſtantly ordered to replace the veil.

The inquiſitor bade Vivaldi to recollect in whoſe preſence he then was, and to dread the puniſhment which his reſiſtance had incurred, and which would be inflicted without delay, unleſs he could give ſome inſtance, that might tend to prove the truth of his late aſſertions.

"If you expect that I ſhould ſay more," replied Vivaldi, "I claim, at leaſt, protection from the unbidden violence of the men who guard me. If they are ſuffered, at their pleaſure, to ſport with the miſery of their priſoner, I I will be inflexibly ſilent; and, ſince I muſt ſuffer, it ſhall be according to the laws of the tribunal."

The vicar-general, or, as he is called, the grand inquiſitor, promiſed Vivaldi

the degree of protection he claimed, and demanded, at the ſame time, what were the words he had juſt heard.

Vivaldi conſidered, that, though juſtice bade him avoid accuſing an enemy of ſuſpicious circumſtances, concerning which he had no proof, yet, that neither juſtice nor common ſenſe required he ſhould make a ſacrifice of himſelf to the dilemma in which he was placed: he, therefore, without further ſcruple, acknowledged, that the voice had bidden him require of the tribunal to ſummon one father Anſaldo, the grand penitentiary of the Santa del Pianto, near Naples, and alſo father Schedoni, who was to anſwer to extraordinary charges, which would be brought againſt him by Anſaldo. Vivaldi anxiouſly and repeatedly declared, that he knew not the nature of the charges, nor that any juſt grounds for them exiſted.

Theſe aſſertions ſeemed to throw the tribunal into new perplexity. Vivaldi heard

heard their buſy voices in low debate, which continued for a conſiderable time. In this interval, he had leiſure to perceive the many improbabilities that either of the familiars ſhould be the ſtranger who ſo myſteriouſly haunted him; and among theſe was the circumſtance of his having reſided ſo long at Naples.

The tribunal, after ſome time had elapſed in conſultation, proceeded on the examination, and Vivaldi was aſked what he knew of father Anſaldo. He immediately replied, that Anſaldo was an utter ſtranger to him, and that he was not even acquainted with a ſingle perſon reſiding in the Santa del Pianto or who had any knowledge of the penitentiary.

"How!" ſaid the grand inquiſitor, "You forget that the perſon, who bade you require of this tribunal to ſummon Anſaldo, has knowledge of him."

"Pardon me, I do not forget," replied Vivaldi; "and I requeſt it may be

remembered that I am not acquainted with that perſon. If, therefore, he had given me any account of Anſaldo, I could not have relied upon its authenticity." Vivaldi again required of the tribunal to underſtand that he did not ſummon Anſaldo, or any other perſon, before them, but had merely obeyed their command, to repeat what the ſtranger had ſaid.

The tribunal acknowledged the juſtneſs of this injunction, and exculpated him from any harm that ſhould be the conſequence of the ſummons. But this aſſurance of ſafety for himſelf was not ſufficient to appeaſe Vivaldi, who was alarmed leſt he ſhould be the means of bringing an innocent perſon under ſuſpicion. The grand inquiſitor again addreſſed him, after a general ſilence had been commanded in the court.

" The account you have given of your informer," ſaid he, " is ſo extraordinary, that it would not deſerve credit, but that you

you have diſcovered the utmoſt reluctance to reveal the charges he gave you, from which, it appears, that, on your part, at leaſt, the ſummons is not malicious. But are you certain that you have not deluded yourſelf, and that the voice beſide you was not an imaginary one, conjured up by your agitated ſpirits?"

"I am certain," replied Vivaldi, with firmneſs.

"It is true," reſumed the grand inquiſitor, "that ſeveral perſons were near you, when you exclaimed, that you heard the voice of your informer; yet no perſon heard it beſides yourſelf!"

"Where are thoſe peſons now?" demanded Vivaldi.

"They are diſperſed; alarmed at your accuſation."

"If you will ſummon them," ſaid Vivaldi, "and order that my eyes may be uncovered, I will point out to you, without heſitation, the perſon of my informer, ſhould he remain among them."

The tribunal commanded that they ſhould appear, but new difficulties aroſe. It was not remembered of whom the crowd conſiſted; a few individuals only were recollected, and theſe were ſummoned.

Vivaldi, in ſolemn expectation, heard ſteps and the hum of voices gathering round him, and impatiently awaited for the words that would reſtore him to ſight, and, perhaps, releaſe him from uncertainty. In a few moments, he heard the command given; the veil was once more removed from his eyes, and he was ordered to point out the accuſer. Vivaldi threw an haſty glance upon the ſurrounding ſtrangers.

"The lights burn dimly," ſaid he, "I cannot diſtinguiſh theſe faces."

It was ordered that a lamp ſhould be lowered from the roof, and that the ſtrangers ſhould arrange themſelves on either ſide of Vivaldi. When this was done,

and

and he glanced his eyes again upon the crowd, "He is not here!" ſaid Vivaldi; "not one of theſe countenances reſembles the monk of Paluzzi. Yet, ſtay; who is he that ſtands in the ſhade behind thoſe perſons on the left? Bid him liſt his cowl!"

The crowd fell back, and the perſon, to whom Vivaldi had pointed, was left alone within the circle.

"He is an officer of the Inquiſition," ſaid a man near Vivaldi, "and he may not be compelled to diſcover his face, unleſs by an expreſs command from the tribunal."

"I call upon the tribunal to command it!" ſaid Vivaldi.

"Who calls!" exclaimed a voice, and Vivaldi recognized the tones of the monk, but he knew not exactly whence they came.

"I, Vincentio di Vivaldi," replied the priſoner, "I claim the privilege that has

been awarded me, and bid you unveil your countenance."

There was a pauſe of ſilence in the court, except that a dull murmur ran through the tribunal. Meanwhile, the figure within the circle ſtood motionleſs, and remained veiled.

"Spare him," ſaid the man, who had before addreſſed Vivaldi; "he has reaſons for wiſhing to remain unknown, which you cannot conjecture. He is an officer of the Inquiſition, and not the perſon you apprehend."

"Perhaps I *can* conjecture his reaſons," replied Vivaldi, who, raiſing his voice, added, "I appeal to this tribunal, and command you, who ſtand alone within the circle, you in black garments, to unveil your features!"

Immediately a loud voice iſſued from the tribunal, and ſaid,

"We command you, in the name of the moſt holy Inquiſition, to reveal yourſelf!"

The

The ſtranger trembled, but, without preſuming to heſitate, uplifed his cowl. Vivaldi's eyes were eagerly fixed upon him; but the action diſcloſed, not the countenance of the monk! but of an official whom he recollected to have ſeen once before, though exactly on what occaſion he did not now remember.

"This is not my informer!" ſaid Vivaldi, turning from him with deep diſappointment, while the ſtranger dropped his cowl, and the crowd cloſed upon him. At the aſſertion of Vivaldi, the members of the tribunal looked upon each other doubtingly, and were ſilent, till the grand inquiſitor, waving his hand, as if to command attention, addreſſed Vivaldi.

"It appears, then, that you *have* formerly ſeen the face of your informer!"

"I have already declared ſo," replied Vivaldi.

The grand inquiſitor demanded when, and where, he had ſeen it.

"Laſt

"Laſt night, and in my priſon," anſwered Vivaldi.

"In your priſon!" ſaid the ordinary inquiſitor, contemptuouſly, who had before examined him, "and in your dreams too, no doubt!"

"In your priſon!" exclaimed ſeveral members of the lower tribunal.

"He dreams ſtill!" obſerved an inquiſitor. "Holy fathers! he abuſes your patience, and the frenzy of terror has deluded his credulity. We neglect the moments."

"We muſt inquire further into this," ſaid another inquiſitor. "Here is ſome deception. If you, Vincentio di Vivaldi, have aſſerted a falſehood—tremble!"

Whether Vivaldi's memory ſtill vibrated with the voice of the monk, or that the tone in which this ſame word was now pronounced did reſemble it, he almoſt ſtarted, when the inquiſitor had ſaid *tremble!* and he demanded who ſpoke then.

"It

"It is ourſelf," anſwered the Inquiſitor.

After a ſhort converſation among the members of the tribunal, the grand inquiſitor gave orders that the centinels, who had watched on the preceding night at the priſon door of Vivaldi, ſhould be brought into the hall of juſtice. The perſons, who had been lately ſummoned into the chamber, were now bidden to withdraw, and all further examination was ſuſpended till the arrival of the centinels; Vivaldi heard only the low voices of the inquiſitors, as they converſed privately together, and he remained ſilent, thoughtful, and amazed.

When the centinels appeared, and were aſked who had entered the priſon of Vivaldi during the laſt night, they declared, without heſitation, or confuſion, that not any perſon had paſſed through the door after the hour when the priſoner had returned from examination, till the

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following morning, when the guard had carried in the uſual allowance of bread and water. In this aſſertion they perſiſted, without the leaſt equivocation, notwithſtanding which they were ordered into confinement, till the affair ſhould be cleared up.

The doubts, however, which were admitted, as to the integrity of theſe men, did not contribute to diſſipate thoſe, which had prevailed over the oppoſite ſide of the queſtion. On the contrary, the ſuſpicions of the tribunal, augmenting with their perplexity, ſeemed to fluctuate equally over every point of the ſubject before them, till, inſtead of throwing any light upon the truth, they only ſerved to involve the whole in deeper obſcurity. More doubtful than before of the honeſty of Vivaldi's extraordinary aſſertions, the grand inquiſitor informed him, that if, after further inquiry into this affair, it ſhould appear he had been trifling with

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the credulity of his judges, he would be ſeverely puniſhed for his audacity; but that, on the other hand, ſhould there be reaſon to believe that the centinels had failed in their duty, and that ſome perſon had entered his priſon, during the night, the tribunal would proceed in a different manner.

Vivaldi, perceiving that, to be believed, it was neceſſary he ſhould be more circumſtantial, deſcribed, with exactneſs, the perſon and appearance of the monk, without, however, mentioning the poniard which had been exhibited. A profound ſilence reigned in the chamber, while he ſpoke; it ſeemed a ſilence not merely of attention, but of aſtoniſhment. Vivaldi himſelf was awed, and when he had concluded, almoſt expected to hear the voice of the monk uttering defiance, or threatening vengeance; but all remained huſhed, till the inquiſitor, who had firſt examined him, ſaid, in a ſolemn tone.

"We

"We have liſtened with attention to what you have delivered, and will give the caſe a full inquiry. Some points, on which you have touched, excite our amazement, and call for particular regard. Retire whence you came—and ſleep this night without fear;—*you will ſoon know more.*"

Vivaldi was immediately led from the chamber, and, ſtill blindfolded, re-conducted to the priſon to which he had ſuppoſed it was deſigned he ſhould return no more. When the veil was withdrawn, he perceived that his guard was changed.

Again left to the ſilence of his cell, he reviewed all that had paſſed in the chamber of juſtice; the queſtions which had been put to him; the different manners of the inquiſitors; the occurrence of the monk's voice; and the ſimilarity, which he had fancied he perceived between it and that of an inquiſitor, when

the latter pronounced the word *tremble*; but the conſideration of all theſe circumſtances did not in any degree relieve him from his perplexity. Sometimes he was inclined to think that the monk was an inquiſitor, and the voice had more than once appeared to proceed from the tribunal; but he remembered, alſo, that, more than once, it had ſpoken cloſe to his ear, and he knew that a member of this tribunal might not leave his ſtation during the examination of a priſoner, and that, even if he had dared to do ſo, his ſingular dreſs would have pointed him out to notice, and conſequently to ſuſpicion, at the moment when Vivaldi had exclaimed that he heard the voice of his informer.

Vivaldi, however, could not avoid meditating, with ſurprize, on the laſt words which the inquiſitor, who had been his chief examiner, had addreſſed to him, when he was diſmiſſed from before the tri-

tribunal. Theſe were the more ſurprizing, becauſe they were the firſt from him that had in any degree indicated a wiſh to conſole or quiet the alarm of the priſoner; and Vivaldi even fancied that they betrayed ſome fore-knowledge that he would not be diſturbed this night by the preſence of his awful viſitor. He would entirely have ceaſed to apprehend, though not to expect, had he been allowed a light, and any weapon of defence, if, in truth, the ſtranger was of a nature to fear a weapon; but, to be thus expoſed to the deſigns of a myſterious and powerful being, whom he was conſcious of having offended, to ſuſtain ſuch a ſituation, without ſuffering anxiety, required ſomewhat more than courage, or leſs than reaſon.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

"—It came o'er my ſoul as doth the thunder,
While diſtant yet, with an expected burſt,
It threats the trembling ear. Now to the trial."

CARACTACUS.

IN conſequence of what had tranſpired at the laſt examination of Vivaldi, the grand penitentiary Anſaldo, together with the father Schedoni, were cited to appear before the table of the holy office.

Schedoni was arreſted on his way to Rome, whither he was going privately to make further efforts for the liberation of Vivaldi, whoſe releaſe he had found it more difficult to effect, than his impriſonment; the perſon upon whoſe aſſiſtance the Confeſſor relied in the firſt inſtance, having boaſted of more influence than he poſſeſſed, or perhaps thought it prudent

to

to exert. Schedoni had been the more anxious to procure an immediate releaſe for Vivaldi, leſt a report of his ſituation ſhould reach his family, notwithſtanding the precautions which are uſually employed to throw an impenetrable ſhroud over the priſoners of this dreadful tribunal, and bury them for ever from the knowledge of their friends. Such premature diſcovery of Vivaldi's circumſtances, Schedoni apprehended might include alſo a diſcovery of the perſecutor, and draw down upon himſelf the abhorrence and the vengeance of a family, whom it was now, more than ever, his wiſh and his intereſt to conciliate. It was ſtill his intention, that the nuptials of Vivaldi and Ellena ſhould be privately ſolemnized immediately on the releaſe of the priſoner, who, even if he had reaſon to ſuſpect Schedoni for his late perſecutor, would then be intereſted in concealing his ſuſpicions for ever, and from whom, therefore, no evil was to be apprehended.

How

How little did Vivaldi foreſee, that in repeating to the tribunal the ſtranger's ſummons of father Schedoni, he was deferring, or, perhaps, wholly preventing his own marriage with Ellena di Roſalba! How little, alſo, did he apprehend what would be the further conſequences of a diſcloſure, which the peculiar circumſtances of his ſituation had hardly permitted him to withhold, though, could he have underſtood the probable event of it, he would have braved all the terrors of the tribunal, and death itſelf, rather than incur the remorſe of having promoted it.

The motive for his arreſtation was concealed from Schedoni, who had not the remoteſt ſuſpicion of its nature, but attributed the arreſt to a diſcovery which the tribunal had made of his being the accuſer of Vivaldi. This diſcloſure he judged to be the conſequence of his own imprudence, in having ſtated, as an inſtance of Vivaldi's

contempt

contempt for the Catholic faith, that he had inſulted a prieſt while doing penance in the church of the Spirito Santo. But by what art the tribunal had diſcovered that he was the prieſt alluded to, and the author of the accuſation, Schedoni could by no means conjecture. He was willing to believe that this arreſt was only for the purpoſe of obtaining proof of Vivaldi's guilt; and the Confeſſor knew that he could ſo conduct himſelf in evidence, as in all probability to exculpate the priſoner, from whom, when he ſhould explain himſelf, no reſentment on account of his former conduct was to be apprehended. Yet Schedoni was not perfectly at eaſe; for it was poſſible that a knowledge of Vivaldi's ſituation, and of the author of it, had reached his family, and had produced his own arreſt. On this head, however, his fears were not powerful; ſince, the longer he dwelt upon the ſubject, the more improbable it appeared that ſuch a diſcloſure,

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at leaſt ſo far as it related to himſelf, could have been affected.

Vivaldi, from the night of his late examination, was not called upon, till Schedoni and father Anſaldo appeared together in the hall of the tribunal. The two latter had already been ſeparately examined, and Anſaldo had privately ſtated the particulars of the confeſſion he had received on the vigil of San Marco, in the year 1752, for which diſcloſure he had received formal abſolution. What had paſſed at that examination does not appear, but on this his ſecond interrogation, he was required to repeat the ſubject and the circumſtances of the confeſſion. This was probably with a view of obſerving its effect upon Schedoni and on Vivaldi, which would direct the opinion of the tribunal as to the guilt of the Confeſſor, and the veracity of the young priſoner.

On this night a very exact inquiry was made, concerning every perſon, who had

obtained admiſſion into the hall of juſtice; ſuch officials as were not immediately neceſſary to aſſiſt in the ceremonies of the tribunal were excluded, together with every other perſon belonging to the Inquiſition not material to the evidence, or to the judges. When this ſcrutiny was over, the priſoners were brought in, and their conductors ordered to withdraw. A ſilence of ſome moments prevailed in the hall; and, however different might be the reflections of the ſeveral priſoners, the degree of anxious expectation was in each, probably, nearly the ſame.

The grand-vicar having ſpoken a few words in private to a perſon on his left hand, an inquiſitor roſe.

"If any perſon in this court," ſaid he, "is known by the name of father Schedoni, belonging to the Dominican ſociety of the Spirito Santo at Naples, let him appear!"

Schedoni

Schedoni anſwered to the ſummons. He came forward with a firm ſtep, and, having croſſed himſelf, and bowed to the tribunal, awaited in ſilence its commands.

The penitentiary Anſaldo was next called upon. Vivaldi obſerved that he faltered as he advanced; and that his obeiſance to the tribunal was more profound than Schedoni's had been. Vivaldi himſelf was then ſummoned; his air was calm and dignified, and his countenance expreſſed the ſolemn energy of his feelings, but nothing of dejection.

Schedoni and Anſaldo were now, for the firſt time, confronted. Whatever might be the feelings of Schedoni on beholding the penitentiary of the *Santa del Pianto*, he effectually concealed them.

The grand-vicar himſelf opened the examination, "You, father Schedoni, of the Spirito Santo," he ſaid, "anſwer and ſay, whether the perſon who now ſtands before you, bearing the title of grand

penitentiary of the order of the *Black Penitents*, and preſiding over the convent of the *Santa Maria del Pianto* at Naples, is known to you.

To this requiſition Schedoni replied with firmneſs in the negative.

"You have never, to your knowledge, ſeen him before this hour?"

"Never!" ſaid Schedoni.

"Let the oath be adminiſtered," added the grand-vicar. Schedoni having accepted it; the ſame queſtions were put to Anſaldo concerning the Confeſſor, when, to the aſtoniſhment of Vivaldi and of the greater part of the court, the penitentiary denied all knowledge of Schedoni. His negative was given, however, in a leſs deciſive manner than that of the Confeſſor, and when the uſual oath was offered, Anſaldo declined to accept it.

Vivaldi was next called upon to identify Schedoni: he declared, that the perſon who was then pointed out to him, he had never

never known by any other denomination than that of father Schedoni; and that he had always underſtood him to be a monk of the Spirito Santo; but Vivaldi was at the ſame time careful to repeat, that he knew nothing further relative to his life.

Schedoni was ſomewhat ſurprized at this apparent candour of Vivaldi towards himſelf; but accuſtomed to impute an evil motive to all conduct, which he could not clearly comprehend, he did not ſcruple to believe, that ſome latent miſchief was directed againſt him in this ſeemingly honeſt declaration.

After ſome further preliminary forms had paſſed, Anſaldo was ordered to relate the particulars of the confeſſion, which had been made to him on the eve of San Marco. It muſt be remembered, that this was ſtill what is called in the Inquiſition, a *private* examination.

After he had taken the cuſtomary oaths to relate neither more nor leſs than the

truth of what had paſſed before him, Anſaldo's depoſitions were written down nearly in the following words; to which Vivaldi liſtened with almoſt trembling attention, for, beſides the curioſity which ſome previous circumſtances had excited reſpecting them, he believed that his own fate in a great meaſure depended upon a diſcovery of the fact to which they led. What, if he had ſurmiſed how much! and that the perſon, whom he had been in ſome degree inſtrumental in citing before this tremendous tribunal, was the father of his Ellena di Roſalba!

Anſaldo, having again anſwered to his name and titles, gave his depoſition as follows:

"It was on the eve of the twenty-fifth of April, and in the year 1752, that as I ſat, according to my cuſtom, in the confeſſional of San Marco, I was alarmed by deep groans, which came from the box on my left hand."

Vivaldi

Vivaldi obſerved, that the date now mentioned agreed with that recorded by the ſtranger, and he was thus prepared to believe what might follow, and to give his confidence to this extraordinary and unſeen perſonage.

Anſaldo continued, "I was the more alarmed by theſe ſounds, becauſe I had not been prepared for them; I knew not that any perſon was in the confeſſional, nor had even obſerved any one paſs along the aiſle—but the duſkineſs of the hour may account for my having failed to do ſo; it was after ſun-ſet, and the tapers at the ſhrine of San Antonio as yet burned feebly in the twilight."

"Be brief, holy father," ſaid the inquiſitor who had formerly been moſt active in examining Vivaldi; "ſpeak cloſely to the point."

"The groans would ſometimes ceaſe," reſumed Anſaldo, "and long pauſes of ſilence follow; they were thoſe of a ſoul

in agony, ſtruggling with the conſciouſneſs of guilt, yet wanting reſolution to confeſs it. I tried to encourage the penitent, and held forth every hope of mercy and forgiveneſs which my duty would allow, but for a conſiderable time without effect; —the enormity of the ſin ſeemed too big for utterance, yet the penitent appeared equally unable to endure the concealment of it. His heart was burſting with the ſecret, and required the comfort of abſolution, even at the price of the ſevereſt penance."

"Facts!" ſaid the inquiſitor, "theſe are only ſurmiſes."

"Facts will come full ſoon!" replied Anſaldo, and bowed his head, "the mention of them will petrify you, holy fathers! as they did me, though not for the ſame reaſons. While I endeavoured to encourage the penitent, and aſſured him, that abſolution ſhould follow the acknowledgment of his crimes, however heinous thoſe

crimes

crimes might be, if accompanied by ſincere repentance, he more than once began his confeſſion, and abruptly dropt it. Once, indeed, he quitted the confeſſional; his agitated ſpirit required liberty; and it was then, as he walked with perturbed ſteps along the aiſle, that I firſt obſerved his figure. He was in the habit of a white friar, and, as nearly as I can recollect, was about the ſtature of him, the father Schedoni, who now ſtands before me."

As Anſaldo delivered theſe words, the attention of the whole tribunal was turned upon Schedoni, who ſtood unmoved, and with his eyes bent towards the ground.

"His face," continued the penitentiary, "I did not ſee; he was, with good reaſon, careful to conceal it; other reſemblance, therefore, than the ſtature, I cannot point out between them. The voice, indeed, the voice of the penitent, I think I ſhall never forget; I ſhould know it again at any diſtance of time."

" Has it not ſtruck your ear, ſince you came within theſe walls?" ſaid a member of the tribunal.

" Of that hereafter," obſerved the inquiſitor, " you wander from the point, father."

The vicar-general remarked, that the circumſtances juſt related were important, and ought not to be paſſed over as irrelevant. The inquiſitor ſubmitted to this opinion, but objected that they were not pertinent to the moment; and Anſaldo was again bidden to repeat what he had heard at confeſſion.

" When the ſtranger returned to the ſteps of the confeſſional, he had acquired ſufficient reſolution to go through with the taſk he had impoſed upon himſelf, and a thrilling voice ſpoke through the grate the facts I am about to relate."

Father Anſaldo pauſed, and was ſomewhat agitated; he ſeemed endeavouring to re-collect courage to go through with what

what he had begun. During this pauſe the ſilence of expectation rapt the court, and the eyes of the tribunal were directed alternately to Anſaldo and Schedoni, who certainly required ſomething more than human firmneſs to ſupport unmoved the ſevere ſcrutiny, and the yet ſeverer ſuſpicions, to which he ſtood expoſed. Whether, however, it was the fortitude of conſcious innocence, or the hardihood of atrocious vice, that protected the Confeſſor, he certainly did not betray any emotion. Vivaldi, who had unceaſingly obſerved him from the commencement of the depoſitions, felt inclined to believe that he was not the penitent deſcribed. Anſaldo, having, at length, recollected himſelf, proceeded as follows:

"I have been through life,' ſaid the penitent, 'the ſlave of my paſſions, and they have led me into horrible exceſſes. I had once a brother.'—He ſtopped, and deep groans again told the agony of his ſoul;

at length, he added—'That brother had a wife!—Now liſten, father, and ſay, whether guilt like mine may hope for abſolution! She was beautiful—I loved her; ſhe was virtuous, and I deſpaired. You, father,' he continued in a frightful tone, 'never knew the fury of deſpair! It overcame or communicated its own force to every other paſſion of my ſoul, and I ſought to releaſe myſelf from its tortures by any means. My brother died!'—The penitent pauſed again," continued Anſaldo, "I trembled while I liſtened; my lips were ſealed. At length, I bade him proceed, and he ſpoke as follows.—'My brother died at a diſtance from home.'—Again the penitent pauſed, and the ſilence continued ſo long, that I thought it proper to inquire of what diſorder the brother had expired. 'Father, I was his murderer!' ſaid the penitent in a voice which I never can forget; it ſunk into my heart."

Anſaldo appeared affected by the remembrance, and was for a moment ſilent.

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At the laſt words Vivaldi had particularly noticed Schedoni, that he might judge by their effect upon him, whether he was guilty; but he remained in his former attitude, and his eyes were ſtill fixed upon the ground.

"Proceed, father!" ſaid the inquiſitor, "what was your reply to this confeſſion?"

"I was ſilent," ſaid Anſaldo; "but at length I bade the penitent go on. 'I contrived, ſaid he, that my brother ſhould die at a diſtance from home, and I ſo conducted the affair, that his widow never ſuſpected the cauſe of his death. It was not till long after the uſual time of mourning had expired, that I ventured to ſolicit her hand: but ſhe had not yet forgotten my brother, and ſhe rejected me. My paſſion would no longer be trifled with. I cauſed her to be carried from her houſe, and ſhe was afterwards willing to retrieve her honour by the marriage vow. I had ſacrificed my conſcience, without having found

found happineſs;—ſhe did not even condeſcend to conceal her diſdain. Mortified, exaſperated by her conduct, I begun to ſuſpect that ſome other emotion than reſentment occaſioned this diſdain; and laſt of all jealouſy—jealouſy came to crown my miſery—to light up all my paſſions into madneſs!'

"The penitent," added Anſaldo, "appeared by the manner in which he uttered this to be nearly frantic at the moment, and convulſive ſobs ſoon ſtifled his words. When he reſumed his confeſſion, he ſaid, 'I ſoon found an object for my jealouſy. Among the few perſons, who viſited us in the retirement of our country reſidence, was a gentleman, who, I fancied, loved my wife; I fancied too, that, whenever he appeared, an air of particular ſatisfaction was viſible on her countenance. She ſeemed to have pleaſure in converſing with, and ſhewing him diſtinction. I even ſometimes thought ſhe had pride in diſ-

playing

playing to me the preference ſhe entertained for him, and that an air of triumph, and even of ſcorn, was addreſſed to me, whenever ſhe mentioned his name. Perhaps, I miſtook reſentment for love, and ſhe only wiſhed to puniſh me, by exciting my jealouſy. Fatal error! ſhe puniſhed herſelf alſo!"

"Be leſs circumſtantial, father," ſaid the inquiſitor.

Anſaldo bowed his head, and proceeded.

'One evening,' continued the penitent, 'that I returned home unexpectedly, I was told that a viſitor was with my wife! As I approached the apartment where they ſat, I heard the voice of Sacchi; it ſeemed mournful and ſupplicating. I ſtopped to liſten, and diſtinguiſhed enough to fire me with vengeance. I reſtrained myſelf, however, ſo far as to ſtep ſoftly to a lattice that opened from the paſſage, and overlooked the apartment. The traitor was on his knee before her. Whether ſhe had heard

heard my ſtep, or obſerved my face, through the high lattice, or that ſhe reſented his conduct, I know not, but ſhe roſe immediately from her chair. I did not pauſe to queſtion her motive; but, ſeizing my ſtiletto, I ruſhed into the room, with an intent to ſtrike it to the villain's heart. The ſuppoſed aſſaſſin of my honour eſcaped into the garden, and was heard of no more.'—But your wife? ſaid I. 'Her boſom received the poniard!' replied the penitent."

Anſaldo's voice faltered, as he repeated this part of the confeſſion, and he was utterly unable to proceed. The tribunal, obſerving his condition, allowed him a chair, and, after a ſtruggle of ſome moments, he added, "Think, holy fathers, O think! what muſt have been my feelings at that inſtant! I was myſelf the lover of the woman, whom he confeſſed himſelf to have murdered."

"Was ſhe innocent?" ſaid a voice; and Vivaldi, whoſe attention had latterly been

been fixed upon Anſaldo, now, on looking at Schedoni, perceived that it was he who had ſpoken. At the ſound of his voice, the penitentiary turned inſtantly towards him. There was a pauſe of general ſilence, during which Anſaldo's eyes were earneſtly fixed upon the accuſed. At length, he ſpoke, "She was innocent!" he replied, with ſolemn emphaſis, "She was moſt virtuous!"

Schedoni had ſhrunk back within himſelf; he aſked no further. A murmur ran through the tribunal, which roſe by degrees, till it broke forth into audible converſation; at length, the ſecretary was directed to note the queſtion of Schedoni.

"Was that the voice of the penitent, which you have juſt heard?" demanded the inquiſitor of Anſaldo. "Remember, you have ſaid that you ſhould know it again!"

"I think it was," replied Anſaldo; "but I cannot ſwear to that."

"What

"What infirmity of judgment is this!" ſaid the ſame inquiſitor, who himſelf was ſeldom troubled with the modeſty of doubt upon any ſubject. Anſaldo was bidden to reſume the narrative.

"On this diſcovery of the murderer," ſaid the penitentiary, "I quitted the confeſſional, and my ſenſes forſook me before I could deliver orders for the detection of the aſſaſſin. When I recovered, it was too late; he had eſcaped! From that hour to the preſent, I have never ſeen him, nor dare I affirm that the perſon now before me is he."

The inquiſitor was about to ſpeak, but the grand-vicar waved his hand, as a ſignal for attention, and, addreſſing Anſaldo, ſaid, "Although you may be unacquainted with Schedoni, the monk of the Spirito Santo, reverend father, can you not recollect the perſon of the Count di Bruno, your former friend?"

Anſaldo again looked at Schedoni, with a ſcrutinizing eye; he fixed it long; but the

the countenance of Schedoni ſuffered no change.

" No !" ſaid the penitentiary, at length, " I dare not take upon me to aſſert, that this is the Count di Bruno. If it is he, years have wrought deeply on his features. That the penitent was the Count di Bruno I have proof; he mentioned my name as his viſitor, and particular circumſtances known only to the Count and myſelf; but that father Schedoni was the penitent, I repeat it, I dare not affirm."

" But that I dare !" ſaid another voice; and Vivaldi, turning towards it, beheld the myſterious ſtranger advancing, his cowl now thrown back, and an air of menace overſpreading every terrific feature. Schedoni, in the inſtant that he perceived him, ſeemed agitated; his countenance, for the firſt time, ſuffered ſome change.

The tribunal was profoundly ſilent, but ſurprize, and a kind of reſtleſs expectation,

tion, marked every brow. Vivaldi was about to exclaim, "That is my informer!" when the voice of the ſtranger checked him.

"Doſt thou know me?" ſaid he, ſternly, to Schedoni, and his attitude became fixed.

Schedoni gave no reply.

"Doſt thou know me?" repeated his accuſer, in a ſteady ſolemn voice.

"Know thee!" uttered Schedoni, faintly.

"Doſt thou know this?" cried the ſtranger, raiſing his voice as he drew from his garment what appeared to be a dagger. "Doſt thou know theſe indelible ſtains?" ſaid he, lifting the poniard, and, with an outſtretched arm, pointing it towards Schedoni.

The Confeſſor turned away his face; it ſeemed as if his heart ſickened.

"With this dagger was thy brother ſlain!" ſaid the terrible ſtranger. "Shall I declare myſelf?"

Sche-

Schedoni's courage forſook him, and he ſunk againſt a pillar of the hall for ſupport.

The conſternation was now general; the extraordinary appearance and conduct of the ſtranger ſeemed to ſtrike the greater part of the tribunal, a tribunal of the inquiſition itſelf! with diſmay. Several of the members roſe from their ſeats; others called aloud for the officials, who kept guard at the doors of the hall, and inquired who had admitted the ſtranger, while the vicar-general and a few inquiſitors, converſed privately together, during which they frequently looked at the ſtranger and at Schedoni, as if they were the ſubjects of the diſcourſe. Meanwhile the monk remained with the dagger in his graſp, and his eyes fixed on the Confeſſor, whoſe face was ſtill averted, and who yet ſupported himſelf againſt the pillar.

At length, the vicar general called upon the members who had ariſen to return to

their ſeats, and ordered that the officials ſhould withdraw to their poſts.

"Holy brethren!" ſaid the vicar, "we recommend to you, at this important hour, ſilence and deliberation. Let the examination of the accuſed proceed; and hereafter let us inquire as to the admittance of the accuſer. For the preſent, ſuffer him alſo to have an hearing, and the father Schedoni to reply.

"We ſuffer him!" anſwered the tribunal, and bowed their heads.

Vivaldi, who, during the tumult, had ineffectually endeavoured to make himſelf heard, now profited by the pauſe which followed the aſſent of the inquiſitors to claim attention: but the inſtant he ſpoke ſeveral members impatiently bade that the examination ſhould proceed, and the grand-vicar was again obliged to command ſilence, before the requeſt of Vivaldi could be underſtood. Permiſſion to ſpeak being granted him,

"That

"That perſon," ſaid he, pointing to the ſtranger, "is the ſame who viſited me in my priſon; and the dagger the ſame he then diſplayed! It was he, who commanded me to ſummon the penitentiary Anſaldo and the father Schedoni. I have acquitted myſelf, and have nothing further to do in this ſtruggle."

The tribunal was again agitated, and the murmurs of private converſation again prevailed. Meanwhile Schedoni appeared to have recovered ſome degree of ſelf-command; he raiſed himſelf, and, bowing to the tribunal, ſeemed preparing to ſpeak; but waited till the confuſion of ſound that filled the hall ſhould ſubſide. At length he could be heard, and, addreſſing the tribunal, he ſaid,

"Holy fathers! the ſtranger who is now before you is an impoſtor! I will prove that my accuſer was once my friend; —you may perceive how much the diſcovery of his perfidy affects me. The charge

charge he brings is moſt falſe and malicious!"

"*Once* thy friend!" replied the ſtranger, with peculiar emphaſis, "and what has made me thy enemy! View theſe ſpots," he continued, pointing to the blade of the poniard. "Are they alſo falſe and malicious? are they not, on the contrary, reflected on thy conſcience?"

"I know them not," replied Schedoni, "my conſcience is unſtained."

"A brother's blood *has* ſtained it!" ſaid the ſtranger, in a hollow voice.

Vivaldi, whoſe attention was now fixed upon Schedoni, obſerved a livid hue overſpread his complexion, and that his eyes were averted from this extraordinary perſon with horror: the ſpectre of his deceaſed brother could ſcarcely have called forth a ſtronger expreſſion. It was not immediately that he could command his voice; when he could, he again appealed to the tribunal.

"Holy

"Holy fathers!" ſaid he, "ſuffer me to defend myſelf."

"Holy fathers!" ſaid the accuſer, with ſolemnity, "hear! hear what I ſhall unfold!"

Schedoni, who ſeemed to ſpeak by a ſtrong effort only, again addreſſed the inquiſitors; "I will prove," ſaid he, "that this evidence is not of a nature to be truſted."

"I will bring *ſuch* proof to the contrary!" ſaid the monk. "And here," pointing to Anſaldo, "is ſufficient teſtimony that the Count di Bruno did confeſs himſelf guilty of murder."

The court commanded ſilence, and, upon the appeal of the ſtranger to Anſaldo, the penitentiary was aſked whether he knew him. He replied, that he did not.

"Recollect yourſelf," ſaid the grand inquiſitor, "it is of the utmoſt conſequence that you ſhould be correct on this point."

The penitentiary obſerved the ſtranger with deep attention, and then repeated his aſſertion.

"Have you never ſeen him before?" ſaid an inquiſitor.

"Never, to my knowledge!" replied Anſaldo.

The inquiſitors looked upon each other in ſilence.

"He ſpeaks the truth, ſaid the ſtranger.

This extraordinary fact did not fail to ſtrike the tribunal, and to aſtoniſh Vivaldi. Since the accuſer confirmed it, Vivaldi was at a loſs to underſtand the means, by which he could have become acquainted with the guilt of Schedoni, who, it was not to be ſuppoſed, would have acknowledged crimes of ſuch magnitude as thoſe contained in the accuſation to any perſon, except, indeed, to his confeſſor, and this confeſſor, it appeared, was ſo far from having betrayed his

his truſt to the accuſer, that he did not even know him. Vivaldi was no leſs perplexed as to what would be the nature of the teſtimony, with which the accuſer deſigned to ſupport his charges: but the pauſe of general amazement, which had permitted Vivaldi theſe conſiderations, was now at an end; the tribunal reſumed the examination, and the grand inquiſitor called aloud,

"You, Vincentio di Vivaldi, anſwer with exactneſs to the queſtions, that ſhall be put to you."

He was then aſked ſome queſtions relative to the perſon, who had viſited him in priſon. In his anſwers, Vivaldi was clear and conciſe, conſtantly affirming that the ſtranger was the ſame, who now accuſed Schedoni.

When the accuſer was interrogated, he acknowledged, without heſitation, that Vivaldi had ſpoken the truth. He was then aſked his motive for that extraordinary viſit.

"It was," replied the monk, "that a murderer might be brought to juſtice."

"This," obſerved the grand inquiſitor, "might have been accompliſhed by fair and open accuſation. If you had known the charge to be juſt, it is probable that you would have appealed directly to this tribunal, inſtead of endeavouring inſidiouſly to obtain an influence over the mind of a priſoner, and urging him to become the inſtrument of bringing the accuſed to puniſhment."

"Yet I have not ſhrunk from diſcovery," obſerved the ſtranger, calmly; "I have voluntarily appeared."

At theſe words Schedoni ſeemed again much agitated, and even drew his hood over his eyes.

"That is juſt," ſaid the grand inquiſitor, addreſſing the ſtranger: "but you have neither declared your name, nor whence you come!

To this remark the monk made no reply; but Schedoni, with reviving ſpirit, urged

urged the circumſtance, in evidence of the malignity and falſehood of the accuſer.

"Wilt thou compel me to reveal my proof?" ſaid the ſtranger: "Dareſt thou to do ſo?"

"Why ſhould I fear thee?" anſwered Schedoni.

"Aſk thy conſcience!" ſaid the ſtranger, with a terrible frown.

The tribunal again ſuſpended the examination, and conſulted in private together.

To the laſt exhortation of the monk, Schedoni was ſilent. Vivaldi obſerved, that, during this ſhort dialogue, the Confeſſor had never once turned his eyes towards the ſtranger, but apparently avoided him as an object too affecting to be looked upon. He judged, from this circumſtance, and from ſome other appearances in his conduct, that Schedoni was guilty; yet the conſciouſneſs of guilt alone did not perfectly account, he

thought, for the ſtrong emotions with which he avoided the ſight of his accuſer—unleſs, indeed, he knew that accuſer to have been, not only an accomplice in his crime, but the actual aſſaſſin. In this caſe it appeared natural even for the ſtern and ſubtle Schedoni to betray his horror on beholding the perſon of the murderer, with the very inſtrument of crime in his graſp. On the other hand, Vivaldi could not but perceive it to be highly improbable, that the very man who had really committed the deed ſhould come voluntarily into a court of juſtice for the purpoſe of accuſing his employer; that he ſhould dare publicly to accuſe him, whoſe guilt, however enormous, was not more ſo than his own.

The extraordinary manner alſo, in which the accuſer had proceeded in the commencement of the affair, engaged Vivaldi's conſideration; his apparent reluc-

tance

tance to be ſeen in this proceſs, and the artful and myſterious plan, by which he had cauſed Schedoni to be ſummoned before the tribunal, and had endeavoured that he ſhould be there accuſed by Anſaldo, indicated, at leaſt to Vivaldi's apprehenſion, the fearfulneſs of guilt, and, ſtill more, that malice, and a thirſt of vengeance, had inſtigated his conduct in the proſecution. If the ſtranger had been actuated only by a love of juſtice, it appeared that he would not have proceeded towards it in a way thus dark and circuitous, but have ſought it by the uſual proceſs, and have produced the proofs, which he even now aſſerted he poſſeſſed, of Schedoni's crimes. In addition to the circumſtances, which ſeemed to ſtrengthen a ſuppoſition of the guiltleſsneſs of Schedoni, was that of the accuſer's avoiding to acknowledge who he was, and whence he came. But Vivaldi pauſed again upon this point; it appeared to be inexplicable,

and he could not imagine why the accuſer had adopted a ſtyle of ſecrecy, which, if he perſiſted in it, muſt probably defeat the very purpoſe of the accuſation; for Vivaldi did not believe that the tribunal would condemn a priſoner upon the teſtimony of a perſon, who, when called upon, ſhould publicly refuſe to reveal himſelf even to them. Yet the accuſer muſt certainly have conſidered this circumſtance before he ventured into court; notwithſtanding which, he had appeared!

Theſe reflections led Vivaldi to various conjectures relative to the viſit he had himſelf received from the monk, the dream that had preceded it, the extraordinary means, by which he had obtained admittance to the priſon, the declaration of the centinels, that not any perſon had paſſed the door, and many other unaccountable particulars; and, while Vivaldi now looked upon the wild phyſiognomy of the ſtranger, he almoſt fancied, as he had

had formerly done, that he beheld ſomething not of this earth.

"I have heard of the ſpirit of the murdered," ſaid he, to himſelf—"reſtleſs for juſtice, becoming viſible in our world——" But Vivaldi checked the imperfect thought, and, though his imagination inclined him to the marvellous, and to admit ideas which, filling and expanding all the faculties of the ſoul, produce feelings that partake of the ſublime, he now reſiſted the propenſity, and diſmiſſed, as abſurd, a ſuppoſition, which had begun to thrill his every nerve with horror. He awaited, however, the reſult of the examination, and what might be the further conduct of the ſtranger, with intenſe expectation.

When the tribunal had, at length, finally determined on the method of their proceedings, Schedoni was firſt called upon, and examined as to his knowledge of the accuſer. It was the ſame inquiſi-

tor, who had formerly interrogated Vivaldi, that now ſpoke. "You, father Schedoni, a monk of the Spirito Santo convent, at Naples, otherwiſe Ferando Count di Bruno, anſwer to the queſtions, which ſhall be put to you. Do you know the name of this man, who now appears as your accuſer?"

"I anſwer not to the title of Count di Bruno," replied the Confeſſor, "but I will declare that I know this man. His name is Nicola di Zampari."

"What is his condition?"

"He is a monk of the Dominican convent of the Spirito Santo," replied Schedoni. "Of his family I know little."

"Where have you ſeen him?"

"In the city of Naples, where he has reſided, during ſome years, beneath the ſame roof with me, when I was of the convent of San Angiolo, and ſince that time, in the Spirito Santo."

"You have been a reſident at the San Angiolo?" ſaid the inquiſitor.

"I have,"

"I have," replied Schedohi; "and it was there that we firſt lived together in the confidence of friendſhip."

"You now perceive how ill placed was that confidence," ſaid the inquiſitor, "and repent, no doubt, of your imprudence?"

The wary Schedoni was not entrapped by this obſervation.

"I muſt lament a diſcovery of ingratitude," he replied, calmly, "but the ſubjects of my confidence were too pure to give occaſion for repentance."

"This Nicola di Zampari was ungrateful, then? You had rendered him ſervices?" ſaid the inquiſitor.

"The cauſe of his enmity I can well explain," obſerved Schedoni, evading, for the preſent, the queſtion.

"Explain," ſaid the ſtranger, ſolemnly.

Schedoni heſitated; ſome ſudden conſideration ſeemed to occaſion him perplexity.

" I call upon you, in the name of your deceaſed brother," ſaid the accuſer, " to reveal the cauſe of my enmity!"

Vivaldi, ſtruck by the tone, in which the ſtranger ſpoke this, turned his eyes upon him, but knew not how to interpret the emotion viſible on his countenance.

The inquiſitor commanded Schedoni to explain himſelf; the latter could not immediately reply, but, when he recovered a ſelf-command, he added,

" I promiſed this accuſer, this Nicola di Zampari, to aſſiſt his preferment with what little intereſt I poſſeſſed; it was but little. Some ſucceeding circumſtances encouraged me to believe that I could more than fulfil my promiſe. His hopes were elevated, and, in the fulneſs of expectation, he was diſappointed, for I was myſelf deceived by the perſon in whom I had truſted. To the diſappointment of a choleric man I am to attribute this unjuſt accuſation."

Sche-

Schedoni pauſed, and an air of diſatisfaction and anxiety appeared upon his features. His accuſer remained ſilent, but a malicious ſmile announced his triumph.

"You muſt declare alſo the ſervices," ſaid the inquiſitor, "which merited the reward promiſed."

"Thoſe ſervices were ineſtimable to me," reſumed Schedoni, after a momentary heſitation; "though they coſt di Zampari little: they were the conſolations of ſympathy, the intelligence of friendſhip, which he adminſtered, and which gratitude told me never could be repaid."

"Of ſympathy! of friendſhip!" ſaid the grand-vicar. "Are we to believe that a man, who brings falſe accuſation of ſo dreadful a nature as the one now before us, is capable of beſtowing the conſolations of ſympathy and of friendſhip? You muſt either acknowledge, that ſervices of a leſs diſintereſted nature won your

your promiſes of reward; or we muſt conclude that your accuſer's charge is juſt. Your aſſertions are inconſiſtent, and your explanation too trivial, to deceive for a moment."

"I have declared the truth," ſaid Schedoni, haughtily.

"In which inſtance?" aſked the inquiſitor; "for your aſſertions contradict each other!"

Schedoni was ſilent. Vivaldi could not judge whether the pride, which occaſioned his ſilence, was that of innocence or of remorſe.

"It appears, from your own teſtimony," ſaid the inquiſitor, "that the ingratitude was your's, not your accuſer's, ſince he conſoled you with kindneſs, which you have never returned him!—Have you any thing further to ſay?"

Schedoni was ſtill ſilent.

"This, then, is your only explanation?" added the inquiſitor.

Sche-

Schedoni bowed his head. The inquiſitor then, addreſſing the accuſer, demanded what he had to reply.

"I have nothing to reply," ſaid the ſtranger, with malicious triumph; "the accuſed has replied for me!"

"We are to conclude, then, that he has ſpoken truth, when he aſſerted you to be a monk of the Spirito Santo, at Naples?" ſaid the inqniſitor.

"You, holy father," ſaid the ſtranger, gravely, appealing to the inquiſitor, "can anſwer for me, whether I am."

Vivaldi liſtened with emotion.

The inquiſitor roſe from his chair, and with ſolemnity replied, "I anſwer, then, that you are not a monk of Naples."

"By that reply," ſaid the vicar-general in a low voice, to the inquiſitor, "I perceive you think father Schedoni is guilty."

The rejoinder of the inquiſitor was delivered in ſo low a tone, that Vivaldi could

could not underſtand it. He was perplexed to interpret the anſwer given to the appeal of the ſtranger. He thought that the inquiſitor would not have ventured an aſſertion thus poſitive, if his opinion had been drawn from inference only; and that he ſhould know the accuſer, while he was conducting himſelf towards him as a ſtranger, amazed Vivaldi, no leſs than if he had underſtood the character of an inquiſitor to be as artleſs as his own. On the other hand, he had ſo frequently ſeen the ſtranger at Paluzzi, and in the habit of a monk, that he could hardly queſtion the aſſertion of Schedoni, as to his identity.

The inquiſitor, addreſſing Schedoni ſaid, "Your evidence we know to be in part erroneous; your accuſer is not a monk of Naples, but a ſervant of the moſt holy Inquiſition. Judging from this part of your evidence, we muſt ſuſpect the whole."

"A ſer-

"A ſervant of the Inquiſition!" exclaimed Schedoni, with unaffected ſurprize. "Reverend father! your aſſertion aſtoniſhes me! You are deceived, however ſtrange it may appear, truſt me, you are deceived! You doubt the credit of my word; I, therefore, will aſſert no more. But inquire of Signor Vivaldi; aſk him, whether he has not often, and lately, ſeen my accuſer at Naples, and in the habit of a monk."

"I have ſeen him at the ruins of Paluzzi, near Naples, and in the eccleſiaſtical dreſs," replied Vivaldi, without waiting for the regular queſtion, "and under circumſtances no leſs extraordinary than thoſe, which have attended him here. But, in return for this frank acknowledgement, I require of you, father Schedoni, to anſwer ſome queſtions, which I ſhall venture to ſuggeſt to the tribunal—By what means were you informed that I have often ſeen the ſtranger at Paluzzi—

and

and was you intereſted or not in his myſterious conduct towards me there?"

To theſe queſtions, though formally delivered from the tribunal, Schedoni did not deign to reply.

"It appears, then," ſaid the vicar-general, "that the accuſer and the accuſed were once accomplices."

The inquiſitor objected, that this did not certainly appear; and that, on the contrary, Schedoni ſeemed to have given his laſt queſtions in deſpair; an obſervation which Vivaldi thought extraordinary from an inquiſitor.

"Be it *accomplices*, if it ſo pleaſe you," ſaid Schedoni, bowing to the grand vicar, without noticing the inquiſitor; "you may call us accomplices, but I ſay, that we were *friends*. Since it is neceſſary to my own peace, that I ſhould more fully explain ſome circumſtances attending our intimacy, I will own that my accuſer was occaſionally my agent,

and

and aſſiſted in preſerving the dignity of an illuſtrious family at Naples, the family of the Vivaldi. And there, holy father," added Schedoni, pointing to Vincentio, "is the ſon of that ancient houſe, for whom I have attempted ſo much!"

Vivaldi was almoſt overwhelmed by this confeſſion of Schedoni, though he had already ſuſpected a part of the truth. In the ſtranger he believed he ſaw the ſlanderer of Ellena, the baſe inſtrument of the Marcheſa's policy, and of Schedoni's ambition; and the whole of his conduct at Paluzzi, at leaſt, ſeemed now intelligible. In Schedoni he beheld his ſecret accuſer, and the inexorable enemy, whom he believed to have occaſioned the impriſonment of Ellena. At this latter conſideration, all circumſpection, all prudence forſook him: he declared, with energy, that, from what Schedoni had juſt acknowledged to be his conduct, he knew him for his ſecret accuſer, and the

ac-

accuſer alſo of Ellena di Roſalba; and he called upon the tribunal to examine into the Confeſſor's motives for the accuſation, and afterwards to give hearing to what he would himſelf unfold.

To this, the grand-vicar replied, that Vivaldi's appeal would be taken into conſideration; and he then ordered that the preſent buſineſs ſhould proceed.

The inquiſitor, addreſſing Schedoni, ſaid, "The diſintereſted nature of your friendſhip is now ſufficiently explained, and the degree of credit, which is due to your late aſſertions underſtood. Of you we aſk no more, but turn to father Nicola di Zampari, and demand what he has to ſay in ſupport of his accuſation. What are your proofs, Nicola di Zampari, that he who calls himſelf father Schedoni is Ferando Count di Bruno; and that he has been guilty of murder, the murder of his brother, and of his wife? Anſwer to our charge!"

"To

"To your first question," said the monk, "I reply that he has himself acknowledged to me, on an occasion, which it is not necessary to mention, that he was the Count di Bruno; to the last, I produce the poniard, which I received with the dying confession of the assassin, whom he employed."

"Still, these are not proofs, but assertions," observed the vicar-general, "and the first forbids our confidence in the second.—If, as you declare, Schedoni himself acknowledged to you that he was Count di Bruno, you must have been to him the intimate friend he has declared you were, or he would not have confided to you a secret so dangerous to himself. And, if you were that friend, what confidence ought we to give to your assertions respecting the dagger? Since, whether your accusations be true or false, you prove yourself guilty of treachery in bringing them forward at all."

Vivaldi

Vivaldi was ſurprized to hear ſuch candour from an inquiſitor.

"Here is my proof," ſaid the ſtranger, who now produced a paper, containing what he aſſerted to be the dying confeſſion of the aſſaſſin. It was ſigned by a prieſt of Rome, as well as by himſelf, and appeared from the date to have been given only a very few weeks before. The prieſt, he ſaid, was living, and might be ſummoned. The tribunal iſſued an order for the apprehenſion of this prieſt, and that he ſhould be brought to give evidence on the following evening; after which, the buſineſs of this night proceeded, without further interruption, towards its concluſion.

The vicar-general ſpoke again, "Nicola di Zampari, I call upon you to ſay, why, if your proof of Schedoni's guilt is ſo clear, as the confeſſion of the aſſaſſin himſelf muſt make it,—why you thought it neceſſary to ſummon father Anſaldo to atteſt the criminality of the Count di Bruno? The dying confeſſion of the aſſaſſin is certainly

tainly of more weight than any other evidence."

"I ſummoned the father Anſaldo," replied the ſtranger, "as a means of proving that Schedoni is the Count di Bruno. The confeſſion of the aſſaſſin ſufficiently proves the Count to have been the inſtigator of the murder, but not that Schedoni is the Count."

"But that is more than I will engage to prove," replied Anſaldo, "I know it was the Count di Bruno who confeſſed to me; but I do not know that the father Schedoni, who is now before me, was the perſon who ſo confeſſed."

"Conſcientiouſly obſerved!" ſaid the vicar-general, interrupting the ſtranger, who was about to reply, "but you, Nicola di Zampari, have not on his head been ſufficiently explicit.—How do you know that Schedoni is the penitent who confeſſed to Anſaldo on the vigil of San Marco?"

"Reverend father, that is the point I was about to explain," replied the monk.

"I my-

" I myſelf accompanied Schedoni, on the eve of San Marco, to the church of the *Santa Maria del Pianto*, at the very hour when the confeſſion is ſaid to have been made. Schedoni told me he was going to confeſſion; and, when I obſerved to him his unuſual agitation, his behaviour implied a conſciouſneſs of extraordinary guilt; he even betrayed it by ſome words, which he dropt in the confuſion of his mind. I parted with him at the gates of the church. He was then of an order of white friars, and habited as father Anſaldo has deſcribed. Within a few weeks after this confeſſion, he left his convent, for what reaſon I never could learn, though I have often ſurmiſed it, and came to reſide at the Spirito Santo, whither I alſo had removed."

" Here is no proof," ſaid the vicar-general, " other friars of that order might confeſs at the ſame hour, in the ſame church."

" But

"But here is ſtrong preſumption for proof," obſerved the inquiſitor. "Holy father, we muſt judge from probabilities, as well as from proof."

"But probabilities themſelves," replied the vicar-general, "are ſtrongly againſt the evidence of a man, who would betray another by means of words dropped in the unguarded moments of powerful emotion."

"Are theſe the ſentiments of an inquiſitor!" ſaid Vivaldi to himſelf, "Can ſuch glorious candour appear amidſt the tribunal of an Inquiſition!" Tears fell faſt upon Vivaldi's cheek while he gazed upon this juſt judge, whoſe candour, had it been exerted in his cauſe, could not have excited more powerful ſenſations of eſteem and admiration. "An inquiſitor!" he repeated to himſelf, "an inquiſitor!"

The inferior inquiſitor, however, was ſo far from poſſeſſing any congeniality of character with his ſuperior, that he was evidently diſappointed by the appearance

of liberality, which the vicar-general diſcovered, and immediately ſaid, "Has the accuſer any thing further to urge in evidence, that the father Schedoni is the penitent, who confeſſed to the penitentiary Anſaldo?"

"I have," replied the monk, with aſperity. "When I had left Schedoni in the church, I lingered without the walls for his return, according to appointment, But he appeared conſiderably ſooner than I expected, and in a ſtate of diſorder, ſuch as I had never witneſſed in him before. In an inſtant he paſſed me, nor could my voice arreſt his progreſs. Confuſion ſeemed to reign within the church and the convent, and when I would have entered, for the purpoſe of inquiring the occaſion of it, the gates were ſuddenly cloſed, and all entrance forbidden. It has ſince appeared, that the monks were then ſearching for the penitent. A rumour afterwards reached me, that a confeſſion had

had cauſed this diſturbance; that the father-confeſſor, who happened at that time to be the grand-penitentiary Anſaldo, had left the chair in horror of what had been divulged from the grate, and had judged it neceſſary that a ſearch ſhould be made for the penitent, who was a white friar. This report, reverend fathers, excited general attention; with me it did more—for I thought I knew the penitent. When on the following day I queſtioned Schedoni as to his ſudden departure from the church of the Black Penitents, his anſwers were dark, but emphatic; and he extorted from me a promiſe, thoughtleſs that I was! never to diſcloſe his viſit of the preceding evening to the *Santa del Pianto*. I then certainly diſcovered who was the penitent."

"Did he, then, confeſs to you alſo?" ſaid the Vicar-general.

"No, father. I underſtood him to be the penitent to whom the report alluded, but I had no ſuſpicion of the nature of his

crimes, till the aſſaſſin began his confeſſion, the concluſion of which clearly explained the ſubject of Schedoni's; it explained alſo his motive for endeavouring ever after to attach me to his intereſt."

"You have now," ſaid the vicar-general, "you have now, confeſſed yourſelf a member of the convent of the Spirito Santo at Naples, and an intimate of the father Schedoni; one whom for many years he had endeavoured to attach to him. Not an hour has paſſed ſince you denied all this; the negative to the latter circumſtance was given, it is true, by implication only; but to the firſt a direct and abſolute denial was pronounced!"

"I denied that I *am* a monk of Naples," replied the accuſer, "and I appealed to the Inquiſitor for the truth of my denial. He has ſaid, that I am now a ſervant of the moſt holy Inquiſition."

The vicar-general, with ſome ſurpriſe, looked at the inquiſitor for explanation; other

other members of the tribunal did the ſame; the reſt appeared to underſtand more than they had thought it neceſſary to avow. The inquiſitor, who had been called upon, roſe, and replied,

"Nicola di Zampari has ſpoken the truth. It is not many weeks ſince he entered the holy office. A certificate from his convent at Naples bears teſtimony to the truth of what I advance, and procured him admittance here."

"It is extraordinary that you ſhould not have diſcloſed your knowledge of this perſon before!" ſaid the vicar-general.

"Holy father, I had reaſons," replied the inquiſitor, "you will recollect that the accuſed was preſent, and you will underſtand them."

"I comprehend you," ſaid the vicar-general, "but I do neither approve of, nor perceive any neceſſity for your countenancing the ſubterfuge of this Nicola di Zampari, relative to his identity. But more of this in private."

"I will

"I will explain all there," anſwered the inquiſitor.

"It appears then," reſumed the vicar-general, ſpeaking aloud, "that this Nicola di Zampari was formerly the friend and confident of father Schedoni, whom he now accuſes. The accuſation is evidently malicious; whether it be alſo falſe, remains to be decided. A material queſtion naturally ariſes out of the ſubject—Why was not the accuſation brought forward befor this period?"

The monk's viſage brightened with the ſatisfaction of anticipated triumph, and he immediately replied,

"Moſt holy father! as ſoon as I aſcertained the crime, I prepared to proſecute the perpetrator of it. A ſhort period only has elapſed ſince the aſſaſſin gave his confeſſion. In this interval I diſcovered, in theſe priſons, Signor Vivaldi, and immediately comprehended by whoſe means he was confined. I knew enough both of the

the accuſer and the accuſed, to underſtand which of theſe was innocent, and had then a double motive for cauſing Schedoni to be ſummoned ;—I wiſhed equally to deliver the innocent and to puniſh the criminal. The queſtion as to the motive for my becoming the enemy of him, who was once my friend, is already anſwered ;—it was a ſenſe of juſtice, not a ſuggeſtion of malice."

The grand-vicar ſmiled, but aſked no further ; and this long examination concluded with committing Schedoni again into cloſe cuſtody, till full evidence ſhould be obtained of his guilt, or his innocence ſhould appear. Reſpecting the manner of his wife's death, there was yet no other evidence than that which was aſſerted to be his own confeſſion, which, though perhaps ſufficient to condemn a criminal before the tribunal of the Inquiſition, was not enough to ſatisfy the preſent vicar-general, who gave direction that means might be employed towards obtaining proof of each article of the accuſation ; in order that,

ſhould Schedoni be acquitted of the charge of having murdered his brother, documents might appear for proſecuting him reſpecting the death of his wife.

Schedoni, when he withdrew from the hall, bowed reſpectfully to the tribunal, and whether, notwithſtanding late appearances, he were innocent, or that ſubtlety enabled him to reaſſume his uſual addreſs, it is certain his manner no longer betrayed any ſymptom of conſcious guilt. His countenance was firm and even tranquil, and his air dignified. Vivaldi, who during the greater part of this examination, had been convineed of his criminality, now only doubted his innocence. Vivaldi was himſelf reconducted to his priſon, and the ſitting of the tribunal was diſſolved.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

"The time ſhall come when Glo'ſter's heart ſhall bleed
In life's laſt hours with horror of the deed;
When dreary viſions ſhall at laſt preſent
Thy vengeful image."——

COLLINS.

WHEN the night of Schedoni's trial arrived, Vivaldi was again ſummoned to the hall of the tribunal. Every circumſtance was now arranged according to the full ceremonies of the place; the members of the tribunal were more numerous than formerly at the examinations; the chief inquiſitors wore habits of a faſhion different from thoſe which before diſtinguiſhed them, and their turbans, of a ſingular form and larger ſize, ſeemed to give an air of ſterner ferocity to their features. The hall, as uſual, was hung with black, and every perſon who appeared there,

whether inquiſitor, official, witneſs, or priſoner, was habited in the ſame diſmal hue, which, together with the kind of light diffuſed through the chamber from lamps hung high in the vaulted roof, and from torches held by parties of officials who kept watch at the ſeveral doors, and in different parts of this immenſe hall, gave a character of gloomy ſolemnity to the aſſembly, which was almoſt horrific.

Vivaldi was ſituated in a place, whence he beheld the whole of the tribunal, and could diſtinguiſh whatever was paſſing in the hall. The countenance of every member was now fully diſplayed to him by the torchmen, who, arranged at the ſteps of the platform on which the three chief inquiſitors were elevated, extended in a ſemicircle on either hand of the place occupied by the inferior members. The glare, which the torches threw upon the latter, certainly did not ſoften the expreſſion of faces, for the moſt part ſculp-

tured,

tured by paſſions of dark malignity, or fiercer cruelty; and Vivaldi could not bear even to examine them long.

Before the bar of the tribunal, he diſtinguiſhed Schedoni, and little did he ſuſpect, that in him, a criminal brought thither to anſwer for the guilt of murder—the murder of a brother, and of a wife, he beheld the parent of Ellena di Roſalba!

Near Schedoni was placed the penitentiary Anſaldo, the Roman prieſt, who was to be a principal witneſs, and father Nicola di Zampari, upon whom Vivaldi could not even look without experiencing ſomewhat of the awe which had prevailed over his mind when he was inclined to conſider the the ſtranger rather as a viſion of another world than as a being of this. The ſame wild and indeſcribable character ſtill diſtinguiſhed his air, his every look and movement, and Vivaldi could not but believe that ſomething in the higheſt degree extraordinary would yet be diſcovered concerning him.

The witneſſes being called over, Vivaldi underſtood that he was placed among them, though he had only repeated the words which father Nicola had ſpoken, and which, ſince Nicola himſelf was preſent as a witneſs againſt Schedoni, he did not perceive could be in the leaſt material on the trial.

When Vivaldi had, in his turn, anſwered to his name, a voice, burſting forth from a diſtant part of the hall, exclaimed, "It is my maſter! my *dear* maſter!" and on directing his eyes whence it came, he perceived the faithful Paulo ſtruggling with his guard. Vivaldi called to him to be patient, and to forbear reſiſtance, an exhortation, however, which ſerved only to increaſe the efforts of the ſervant for liberty, and in the next inſtant he broke from the graſp of the officials, and, darting towards Vivaldi, fell at his feet, ſobbing, and claſping his knees, and exclaiming, "O my maſter! my maſter! have I found you at laſt?"

Vivaldi,

Vivaldi, as much affected by this meeting as Paulo, could not immediately ſpeak. He would, however, have raiſed and embraced his affectionate ſervant, but Paulo, ſtill clinging to his knees and ſobbing, was ſo much agitated that he ſcarcely underſtood any thing ſaid to him, and to the kind aſſurances and gentle remonſtrances of Vivaldi, conſtantly replied as if to the officers, whom he fancied to be forcing him away.

"Remember your ſituation, Paulo," ſaid Vivaldi, "conſider mine alſo, and be governed by prudence."

"You ſhall not force me hence!" cried Paulo, "you can take my life only once; if I muſt die, it ſhall be here."

"Recollect yourſelf, Paulo, and be compoſed. Your life, I truſt, is in no danger."

Paulo looked up, and again burſting into a paſſion of tears, repeated, "O! my maſter! my maſter! where have you been all

all this while? are you indeed alive? I thought I never ſhould ſee you again! I have dreamt an hundred times that you were dead and buried! and I wiſhed to be dead and buried with you. I thought you was gone out of this world into the next. I feared you was gone to heaven, and ſo believed we ſhould never meet again. But now, I ſee you once more, and know that you live! O! my maſter! my maſter!"

The officers who had followed Paulo, now endeavouring to withdraw him, he became more outrageous.

"Do your worſt at once," ſaid he; "but you ſhall find tough work of it, if you try to force me from hence, ſo you had better be contented with killing me here."

The incenſed officials were laying violent hands upon him, when Vivaldi interpoſed. "I entreat, I ſupplicate you," ſaid he, "that you will ſuffer him to remain near me."

"It

"It is impoſſible," replied an officer, "we dare not."

"I will promiſe that he ſhall not even ſpeak to me, if you will only allow him to be near," added Vivaldi.

"Not ſpeak to you, maſter!" exclaimed Paulo, "but I will ſtay by you, and ſpeak to you as long as I like, till my laſt gaſp. Let them do their worſt at once; I defy them all, and all the devils of inquiſitors at their heels too, to force me away. I can die but once, and they ought to be ſatisfied with that,—ſo what is there to be afraid of? Not ſpeak!"

"He knows not what he ſays," ſaid Vivaldi to the officials, while he endeavoured to ſilence Paulo with his hand, "I am certain that he will ſubmit to whatever I ſhall require of him, and will be entirely ſilent; or, if he does ſpeak now and then, it ſhall be only in a whiſper."

"A whiſper!" ſaid an officer ſneeringly, "do you ſuppoſe Signor, that any perſon

perſon is ſuffered to ſpeak in a whiſper here?"

"A whiſper!" ſhouted Paulo, "I ſcorn to ſpeak in a whiſper. I will ſpeak ſo loud, that every word I ſay ſhall ring in the ears of all thoſe old black devils on the benches yonder; aye, and thoſe on that mountebank ſtage too, that ſit there looking ſo grim and angry as if they longed to tear us in pieces. They"——

"Silence," ſaid Vivaldi with emphaſis, "Paulo, I command you to be ſilent."

"They ſhall know a bit of my mind," continued Paulo, without noticing Vivaldi, "I will tell them what they have to expect for all their cruel uſage of my poor maſter. Where do they expect to go when they die, I wonder? Though for that matter, they cannot go to a worſe place than they are in already, and I ſuppoſe it is knowing that, which makes them not afraid of being ever ſo wicked. They ſhall hear a little plain truth, for once

once in their lives, however, they ſhall hear"——

During the whole of this harangue, Vivaldi, alarmed for the conſequence of ſuch imprudent, though honeſt indignation, had been uſing all poſſible effort to ſilence him, and was the more alarmed, ſince the officials made no further attempt to interrupt Paulo, a forbearance, which Vivaldi attributed to malignity, and to a wiſh that Paulo might be entrapped by his own act. At length he made himſelf heard.

"I *entreat*," ſaid Vivaldi.

Paulo ſtopped for a moment.

"Paulo!" rejoined Vivaldi earneſtly, "do you love your maſter?"

"Love my maſter!" ſaid Paulo reſentfully, without allowing Vivaldi to finiſh his ſentence, "Have I not gone through fire and water for him? or, what is as good, have I not put myſelf into the Inquiſition, and all on his account? and now

now to be asked, 'Do I love my master!' If you believe, Signor, that any thing else made me come here, into these dismal holes, you are quite entirely out: and when they have made an end of me, as I suppose they will do, before all is over, you will, perhaps, think better of me than to suspect that I came here for my own pleasure."

"All that may be as you say, Paulo," replied Vivaldi coldly, while he with difficulty commanded his tears, "but your immediate submission is the only conduct that can convince me of the sincerity of your professions. I *entreat* you to be silent."

"*Entreat* me!" said Paulo, "O my master! what have I done that it should come to this? *Entreat* me!" he repeated, sobbing.

"You will then give me this proof of your attachment?" asked Vivaldi.

"Do not use such a heart-breaking word again, master," replied Paulo, while he

he daſhed the tears from his cheek, "ſuch a heart-breaking word, and I will do any thing."

"You ſubmit to what I require then, Paulo?"

"Aye, Signor, if—if it is even to kneel at the feet of that devil of an inquiſitor, yonder."

"I ſhall only require you to be ſilent," replied Vivaldi, "and you may then be permitted to remain near me."

"Well, Signor, well; I will do as you bid me, then, and only juſt ſay"—

"Not a ſyllable! Paulo," interrupted Vivaldi.

"Only juſt ſay, maſter"——

"Not a word I entreat you!" added Vivaldi, "or you will be removed immediately."

"His removal does not depend on that," ſaid one of the officials, breaking from his watchful ſilence, "he muſt go, and that without more delay."

"What!

"What! after I have promiſed not to open my lips!" ſaid Paulo, "do you pretend to break your agreement?"

"There *is* no pretence, and there *was* no agreement," replied the man ſharply, "ſo obey directly, or it will be the worſe for you."

The officials were provoked, and Paulo became ſtill more enraged and clamorous, till at length the uproar reached the tribunal at the other end of the hall, and ſilence having been commanded, an inquiry was made into the cauſe of the confuſion. The conſequence of this was, an order that Paulo ſhould withdraw from Vivaldi; but as at this moment he feared no greater evil, he gave his refuſal to the tribunal with as little ceremony as he had done before to the officials.

At length, after much difficulty, a ſort of compromiſe was made, and Paulo being ſoothed by his maſter into ſome degree of compliance, was ſuffered to remain within a ſhort diſtance of him.

The

The buſineſs of the trial ſoon after commenced. Anſaldo, the penitentiary, and father Nicola, appeared as witneſſes, as did alſo the Roman prieſt, who had aſſiſted in taking the depoſitions of the dying aſſaſſin. He had been privately interrogated, and had given clear and ſatisfactory evidence as to the truth of the paper produced by Nicola. Other witneſſes alſo had been ſubpœnaed, whom Schedoni had no expectation of meeting.

The deportment of the Confeſſor, on firſt entering the hall, was collected and firm; it remained unchanged when the Roman prieſt was brought forward; but, on the appearance of another witneſs, his courage ſeemed to falter. Before this evidence was, however, called for, the depoſitions of the aſſaſſin were publicly read. They ſtated with the cloſeſt conciſeneſs the chief facts, of which the following is a ſomewhat more dilated narrative.

It

It appeared, that about the year 1742, the late Count di Bruno had paſſed over into Greece, a journey which his brother, the preſent Confeſſor, having long expected, had meditated to take advantage of. Though a lawleſs paſſion had firſt ſuggeſted to the dark mind of Schedoni the atrocious act, which ſhould deſtroy a brother, many circumſtances and conſiderations had conſpired to urge him towards its accompliſhment. Among theſe was the conduct of the late Count towards himſelf, which, however reaſonable, as it had contradicted his own ſelfiſh gratifications, and added ſtrong reproof to oppoſition, had excited his moſt inveterate hatred. Schedoni, who, as a younger brother of his family, bore, at that time, the title of Count di Marinella, had diſſipated his ſmall patrimony at a very early age; but, though ſuffering might then have taught him prudence, it had only encouraged him in duplicity, and rendered

dered him more eager to ſeek a temporary refuge in the ſame habits of extravagance which had led to it. The Count di Bruno, though his fortune was very limited, had afforded frequent ſupplies to his brother; till, finding that he was incorrigible, and that the ſums which he himſelf ſpared with difficulty from his family were laviſhed, without remorſe, by Marinella, inſtead of being applied with economy to his ſupport, he refuſed further aid than was ſufficient for his abſolute neceſſities.

It would be difficult for a candid mind to believe how a conduct ſo reaſonable could poſſibly excite hatred in any breaſt, or that the power of ſelfiſhneſs could ſo far warp any underſtanding as to induce Marinella, whom we will in future again call Schedoni, to look upon his brother with deteſtation, becauſe he had refuſed to ruin himſelf that his kinſman might revel! Yet it is certain that Schedoni,

doni, terming the neceſſary prudence of di Bruno to be meanneſs and cold inſenſibility to the comfort of others, ſuffered full as much reſentment towards him from ſyſtem as he did from paſſion, though the meanneſs and the inſenſibility he imagined in his brother's character were not only real traits in his own, but were diſplaying themſelves in the very arguments he urged againſt them.

The rancour thus excited was cheriſhed by innumerable circumſtances, and ripened by envy, that meaneſt and moſt malignant of the human paſſions; by envy of di Bruno's bleſſings, of an unencumbered eſtate, and of a beautiful wife, he was tempted to perpetrate the deed, which might transfer thoſe bleſſings to himſelf. Spalatro, whom he employed to this purpoſe, was well known to him, and he did not fear to confide the conduct of the crime to this man, who was to purchaſe a little habitation on the remote

ſhore of the Adriatic, and, with a certain ſtipend, to reſide there. The ruinous dwelling, to which Ellena had been carried, as its ſolitary ſituation ſuited Schedoni's views, was taken for him.

Schedoni, who had good intelligence of all di Bruno's movements, acquainted Spalatro, from time to time, with his exact ſituation; and it was after di Bruno, on his return, had croſſed the Adriatic, from Raguſi to Manfredonia, and was entering upon the woods of the Garganus, that Spalatro, with his comrade, overtook him. They fired at the Count and his attendants, who were only a valet, and a guide of the country; and, concealed among the thickets, they ſecurely repeated the attack. The ſhot did not immediately ſucceed, and the Count, looking round to diſcover his enemy, prepared to defend himſelf, but the firing was ſo rapidly ſuſtained, that, at length, both di Bruno and his ſervant fell, covered with wounds. The guide fled.

The unfortunate travellers were buried by their aſſaſſins on the ſpot: but, whether the ſuſpicion which attends upon the conſciouſneſs of guilt, prompted Spalatro to guard againſt every poſſibility of being betrayed by the accomplice of his crime, or whatever was the motive, he returned to the foreſt alone; and, ſhrouded by night, removed the bodies to a pit, which he had prepared under the flooring of the houſe where he lived: thus diſplacing all proof, ſhould his accomplice hereafter point out to juſtice the ſpot in which he had aſſiſted to depoſit the mangled remains of di Bruno.

Schedoni contrived a plauſible hiſtory of the ſhipwreck of his brother upon the Adriatic, and of the loſs of the whole crew; and, as no perſons but the aſſaſſins were acquainted with the real cauſe of his death, the guide, who had fled, and the people at the only town he had paſſed through, ſince he landed, being ignorant

norant even of the name of di Bruno, there was not any circumſtance to contradict the falſehood. It was univerſally credited, and even the widow of the Count had, perhaps, never doubted its truth; or if, after her compelled marriage with Schedoni, his conduct did awaken a ſuſpicion, it was too vague to produce any ſerious conſequence.

During the reading of Spalatro's confeſſion, and particularly at the concluſion of it, the ſurprize and diſmay of Schedoni were too powerful for concealment; and it was not the leaſt conſiderable part of his wonder, that Spalatro ſhould have come to Rome for the purpoſe of making theſe depoſitions; but further conſideration gave him a conjecture of the truth.

The account which Spalatro had given of his motive for this journey to the prieſt was, that, having lately underſtood Schedoni to be reſident at Rome, he had followed him thither, with an intention of

relieving his conſcience by an acknowledgment of his own crimes, and a diſcloſure of Schedoni's. This, however, was not exactly the fact. The deſign of Spalatro was to extort money from the guilty Confeſſor; a deſign, from which the latter believed he had protected himſelf, as well as from every other evil conſequence, when he miſled his late accomplice reſpecting his place of reſidence; little foreſeeing that the very artifice which ſhould ſend this man in ſearch of him to Rome, inſtead of Naples, would be the means of bringing his crimes before the public.

Spalatro had followed the ſteps of Schedoni as far as the town at which he ſlept, on the firſt night of his journey; and, having there paſſed him, had reached the villa di Cambruſca, when, perceiving the Confeſſor approaching, he had taken ſhelter from obſervation, within the ruin. The motive, which before made him

ſhrink

ſhrink from notice, had contributed, and ſtill did ſo, to a ſuſpicion that he aimed at the life of Schedoni, who, in wounding him, believed he had ſaved himſelf from an aſſaſſin. The wounds, however, of Spalatro did not ſo much diſable him, but that he proceeded towards Rome from the town whence the parting road had conducted his maſter to Naples.

The fatigue of a long journey, performed chiefly on foot, in Spalatro's wounded condition, occaſioned a fever, that terminated together his journey and his life; and in his laſt hours he had unburdened his conſcience by a full confeſſion of his guilt. The prieſt, who, on this occaſion, had been ſent for, alarmed by the importance of the confeſſion, ſince it implicated a living perſon, called in a friend as witneſs to the depoſitions. This witneſs was father Nicola, the former intimate of Schedoni, and who was of a character to rejoice in any diſcovery which

might puniſh a man, from whoſe repeated promiſes he had received only ſevere diſappointments.

Schedoni now perceived that all his deſigns againſt Spalatro had failed, and he had meditated more than have yet been fully diſcloſed. It may be remembered, that on parting with the peaſant, his conductor, the Confeſſor, gave him a ſtiletto to defend him, as he ſaid, from the attack of Spalatro, in caſe of encountering him on the road. The point of this inſtrument was tipped with poiſon; ſo that a ſcratch from it was ſufficient to inflict death. Schedoni had for many years ſecretly carried about him ſuch an envenomed inſtrument, for reaſons known only to himſelf. He had hoped, that, ſhould the peaſant meet Spalatro, and be provoked to defend himſelf, this ſtiletto would terminate the life of his accomplice, and relieve him from all probability of diſcovery, ſince the other aſſaſſin whom

whom he employed had been dead ſeveral years. The expedient failed in every reſpect; the peaſant did not even ſee Spalatro; and, before he reached his home, he luckily loſt the fatal ſtiletto, which, as he had diſcovered himſelf to be acquainted with ſome circumſtances connected with the crimes of Schedoni, the Confeſſor would have wiſhed him to keep, from the chance, that he might ſome time injure himſelf in uſing it. The poniard, however, as he had no proper means of faſtening it to his dreſs, had fallen, and was carried away by the torrent he was croſſing at that moment.

But, if Schedoni had been ſhocked by the confeſſion of the aſſaſſin, his diſmay was conſiderably greater, when a new witneſs was brought forward, and he perceived an ancient domeſtic of his houſe. This man identified Schedoni for Ferando Count di Bruno, with whom he had lived as a ſervant after the death of the Count his brother. And not only did he bear

teſtimony to the perſon of Schedoni, but to the death of the Counteſs, his wife. Giovanni declared himſelf to be one of the domeſtics who had aſſiſted in conveying her to her apartment, after ſhe had been ſtruck by the poniard of Schedoni, and who had afterwards attended her funeral in the church of the Santa del Miracoli, a convent near the late reſidence of di Bruno. He further affirmed, that the phyſicians had reported her death to be in conſequence of the wound ſhe had received, and he bore witneſs to the flight of his maſter, previous to the death of the Counteſs, and immediately upon the aſſaſſination, and that he had never publicly appeared upon his eſtate ſince that period.

An inquiſitor aſked, whether any meaſures had been taken by the relations of the deceaſed lady, toward a proſecution of the Count.

The witneſs replied, that a long ſearch had been made for the Count, for ſuch a pur-

purpoſe, but that he had wholly eluded diſcovery, and that, of courſe, no further ſtep had been taken in the affair. This reply appeared to occaſion diſſatisfaction; the tribunal was ſilent, and ſeemed to heſitate; the vicar-general then addreſſed the witneſs.

"How can you be certain that the perſon now before you, calling himſelf father Schedoni, is the Count di Bruno, your former maſter, if you have never ſeen him during the long interval of years you mention?"

Giovanni, without heſitation, anſwered, that, though years had worn the features of the Count, he recollected them the moment he beheld him; and not the Count only, but the perſon of the penitentiary Anſaldo, whom he had ſeen a frequent viſitor at the houſe of di Bruno, though his appearance alſo was conſiderably changed by time, and by the eccleſiaſtical habit which he now wore.

The vicar-general ſeemed ſtill to doubt the evidence of this man, till Anſaldo himſelf, on being called upon, remembered him to have been a ſervant of the Count, though he could not identify the Count himſelf.

The grand-inquiſitor remarked, that it was extraordinary he ſhould recollect the face of the ſervant, yet forget that of the maſter, with whom he had lived in habits of intimacy. To this Anſaldo replied, that the ſtronger paſſions of Schedoni, together with his particular habits of life, might reaſonably be ſuppoſed to have wrought a greater change upon the features of the Count than the character and circumſtances of Giovanni's could have effected on his.

Schedoni, not without reaſon, was appalled on the appearance of this ſervant, whoſe further teſtimony gave ſuch clearneſs and force to ſome other parts of the evidence that the tribunal pronounced

nounced ſentence upon Schedoni, as the murderer of the Count his brother; and as this, the firſt charge, was ſufficient for his condemnation to death, they did not proceed upon the ſecond, that which related to his wife.

The emotion betrayed by Schedoni, on the appearance of the laſt witneſs, and during the delivery of the evidence, diſappeared when his fate became certain, and when the dreadful ſentence of the law was pronounced, it made no viſible impreſſion on his mind. From that moment, his firmneſs, or his hardihood, never forſook him.

Vivaldi, who witneſſed this condemnation, appeared infinitely more affected by it than himſelf; and, though in revealing the circumſtance of father Nicola's ſummons, which had eventually led to the diſcovery of Schedoni's crimes, he had not been left a choice in his conduct, he felt, at this moment, as miſerable as if

he had actually borne witneſs againſt the life of a fellow being: what, then, would have been his feelings, had he been told that this Schedoni, thus condemned, was the father of Ellena di Roſalba! But, whatever theſe might be, he was ſoon condemned to experience them. One of the moſt powerful of Schedoni's paſſions appeared even in this laſt ſcene; and as, in quitting the tribunal, he paſſed near Vivaldi, he uttered theſe few words—"In me you have murdered the father of Ellena di Roſalba!"

Not with any hope that the interceſſion of Vivaldi, himſelf alſo a priſoner, could in the leaſt mitigate a ſentence pronounced by the Inquiſition, did he ſay this, but for the purpoſe of revenging himſelf for the evil, which Vivaldi's evidence had contributed to produce, and inflicting the exquiſite miſery ſuch information muſt give. The attempt ſucceeded too well.

At

At firſt, indeed, Vivaldi judged this to be only the deſperate aſſertion of a man, who believed his laſt chance of eſcaping the rigour of the law, to reſt with him; and, at the mention of Ellena, forgetting every precaution, he loudly demanded to know her ſituation. Schedoni, throwing upon him an horrible ſmile of triumph and deriſion, was paſſing forward without replying, but Vivaldi, unable to ſupport this ſtate of uncertainty, aſked permiſſion of the tribunal to converſe, for a few moments, with the priſoner; a requeſt which was granted with extreme reluctance, and only on condition that the converſation ſhould be public.

To Vivaldi's queſtions, as to the ſituation of Ellena, Schedoni only replied, that ſhe was his daughter, and the ſolemnity, which accompanied theſe repeated aſſertions, though it failed to convince Vivaldi of this truth, occaſioned him ago-

agonizing doubt and apprehenſion: but when the Confeſſor, perceiving the policy of diſcloſing her place of reſidence to Vivaldi, ſoftened from his deſire of vengeance to ſecure the intereſt of his family, and named the *Santa della Piéta* as her preſent aſylum, the joy of ſuch intelligence overcame, for a time, every other conſideration.

To this dialogue, however, the officials put a ſpeedy concluſion; Schedoni was led back to his cell, and Vivaldi was ſoon after ordered to his former cloſe confinement.

But Paulo became again outrageous, when he was about to be ſeparated from his maſter, till the latter, having petitioned the tribunal, that his ſervant might accompany him to his priſon, and received an abſolute refuſal, endeavoured to calm the violence of his deſpair. He fell at his maſter's feet, and ſhed tears, but he uttered no further complaints. When he roſe,

roſe, he turned his eyes in ſilence upon Vivaldi, and they ſeemed to ſay, "Dear maſter! I ſhall never ſee you more!" and with this ſad expreſſion, he continued to gaze on him till he had left the hall.

Vivaldi, notwithſtanding the various ſubjects of his diſtreſs, could not bear to meet the piteous looks of this poor man, and he withdrew his eyes; yet, at every other ſtep he took, they conſtantly returned to his faithful ſervant, till the doors folded him from ſight.

When he had quitted the hall, Vivaldi pleaded, however hopeleſsly, to the officials, in favour of Paulo, entreating that they would ſpeak to the perſons who kept guard over him, and prevail with them to ſhew him every allowable indulgence.

"No indulgence can be allowed him," replied one of the men, "except bread and water, and the liberty of walking in his cell."

"No *other!*" ſaid Vivaldi.

"None,"

"None," repeated the official. "This priſoner has been near getting one of his guards into a ſcrape already, for ſomehow or other, he ſo talked him over, and won upon him (for he is but a young one here), that the man let him have a light, and a pen and ink; but, luckily, it was found out before any harm was done."

"And what became of this honeſt fellow?" inquired Vivaldi.

"Honeſt! he was none ſo honeſt, either, Signor, if he could not mind his duty."

"Was he puniſhed, then?"

"No, Signor," replied the man, pauſing, and looking back upon the long avenue they were paſſing, to inquire whether he was obſerved to hold this converſation with a priſoner: "no, Signor, he was a younker, ſo they let him off for once, and ſent him to guard a man, who was not ſo full of his coaxing ways."

"Paulo

"Paulo made him merry, perhaps?" aſked Vivaldi. "What were the coaxing ways you ſpoke of?"

"Merry, Signor! no! he made him cry, and that was as bad."

"Indeed!" ſaid Vivaldi. "The man muſt have been here, then, a very ſhort time."

"Not more than a month, or ſo, Signor."

"But the coaxing ways you talked of," repeated Vivaldi, "what were they?—a ducat, or ſo?"

"A ducat!" exclaimed the man, "no! not a *paolo!*"

"Are you *ſure* of that?" cried Vivaldi, ſhrewdly.

"Aye, ſure enough, Signor. This fellow is not worth a ducat in the world?"

"But his maſter is, friend," obſerved Vivaldi, in a very low voice, while he put ſome money into his hand.

The

The officer made no anſwer, but concealed the money, and nothing further was ſaid.

Vivaldi had given this as a bribe, to procure ſome kindneſs for his ſervant, not from any conſideration of himſelf, for his own critical ſituation had ceaſed at this time to be a ſubject of anxiety with him. His mind was at preſent ſtrangely agitated between emotions the moſt oppoſite in their nature, the joy which a diſcovery of Ellena's ſafety inſpired, and the horrible ſuſpicion that Schedoni's aſſurances of relationſhip occaſioned. That his Ellena was the daughter of a murderer, that the father of Ellena ſhould be brought to ignominious death, and that he himſelf, however unintentionally, ſhould have aſſiſted to this event, were conſiderations almoſt too horrible to be ſuſtained! Vivaldi ſought refuge from them in various conjectures as to the motive, which might have induced Schedoni

to

to assert a falsehood in this instance; but that of revenge alone appeared plausible; and even this surmise was weakened, when he considered that the Confessor had assured him of Ellena's safety, an assurance which, as Vivaldi did not detect the selfish policy connected with it, he believed Schedoni would not have given, had his general intent towards him been malicious. But it was possible, that this very information, on which all his comfort reposed, might be false, and had been given only for the purpose of inflicting the anguish a discovery of the truth must lead to! With an anxiety so intense, as almost to overcome his faculty of judging, he examined every minute probability relative to this point, and concluded with believing that Schedoni had, in this last instance, at least, spoken honestly.

Whe-

Whether he had done ſo in his firſt aſſertion was a queſtion, which had raiſed in Vivaldi's mind a tempeſt of conjecture and of horror; for, while the ſubject of it was too aſtoniſhing to be fully believed, it was alſo too dreadful, not to be apprehended even as a poſſibility.

CHAP. IX.

O holy nun! why bend the mournful head?
Why fall thoſe tears from lids uplift in pray'r?
Why o'er thy pale cheek ſteals the feeble bluſh,
Then fades, and leaves it wan as the lily
On which a moon-beam falls?

WHILE theſe events were paſſing in the priſons of the Inquiſition at Rome, Ellena, in the ſanctuary of *Our Lady of Pity*, remained ignorant of Schedoni's arreſt, and of Vivaldi's ſituation. She underſtood that the Confeſſor was preparing to acknowledge her for his daughter, and believed that ſhe comprehended alſo the motive for his abſence; but, though he had forbidden her to expect a viſit from him till his arrangement ſhould be completed, he had promiſed to write in the mean time, and inform her of all the preſent

ſent circumſtances of Vivaldi; his unexpected ſilence had excited, therefore, apprehenſions as various, though not ſo terrible, as thoſe which Vivaldi had ſuffered for her; nor did the ſilence of Vivaldi himſelf appear leſs extraordinary.

"His confinement muſt be ſevere indeed," ſaid the afflicted Ellena, "ſince he cannot relieve my anxiety by a ſingle line of intelligence. Or, perhaps, haraſſed by unceaſing oppoſition, he has ſubmitted to the command of his family, and has conſented to forget me. Ah! why did I leave the opportunity for that command to his family; why did I not enforce it myſelf!"

Yet, while ſhe uttered this ſelf-reproach, the tears ſhe ſhed contradicted the pride which had ſuggeſted it; and a conviction lurking in her heart that Vivaldi could not ſo reſign her, ſoon diſſipated thoſe tears. But other conjectures recalled them; it was poſſible that he was ill—that he was dead.

In

In ſuch vague and gloomy ſurmiſe her days paſſed away ; employment could no longer withdraw her from herſelf, nor muſic, even for a moment, charm away the ſenſe of ſorrow. Yet ſhe regularly partook of the various occupations of the nuns ; and was ſo far from permitting herſelf to indulge in any uſeleſs expreſſion of anxiety, that ſhe had never once diſcloſed the ſacred ſubject of it ; ſo that, though ſhe could not aſſume an air of cheerfulneſs, ſhe never appeared otherwiſe than tranquil. Her moſt ſoothing, though perhaps moſt melancholy hour, was when about ſun-ſet ſhe could withdraw unnoticed, to the terrace among the rocks that overlooked the convent, and formed a part of its domain. There, alone and relieved from all the ceremonial reſtraints of the ſociety, her very thoughts ſeemed more at liberty. As, from beneath the light foliage of the accacias, or the more majeſtic ſhade of the plane-trees that waved

their

their branches over the many-coloured cliffs of this terrace, Ellena looked down upon the magnificent ſcenery of the bay; it brought back to memory, in ſad yet pleaſing detail, the many happy days ſhe had paſſed on thoſe blue waters, or on the ſhores, in the ſociety of Vivaldi and her departed relative Bianchi; and every point of the proſpect marked by ſuch remembrance, which the veiling diſtance ſtole, was reſcued by affection and pictured by imagination, in tints more animated than thoſe of brighteſt nature.

One evening Ellena had lingered on the terrace later than uſual. She had watched the rays retiring from the higheſt points of the horizon, and the fading imagery of the lower ſcene, till, the ſun having ſunk into the waves, all colouring was withdrawn, except an empurpling and repoſing hue, which overſpread the waters and the heavens, and blended in ſoft confuſion every feature of the land-

ſcape

ſcape. The roofs and ſlender ſpires of the Santa della Piéta, with a ſingle tower of the church riſing loftily over every other part of the buildings that compoſed the convent, were fading faſt from the eye; but the ſolemn tint that inveſted them accorded ſo well with their ſtyle, that Ellena was unwilling to relinquiſh this intereſting object. Suddenly ſhe perceived through the dubious light an unuſual number of moving figures in the court of the great cloiſter, and, liſtening, fancied ſhe could diſtinguiſh the murmuring of many voices. The white drapery of the nuns rendered them conſpicuous as they moved, but it was impoſſible to aſcertain who were the individuals engaged in this buſtle. Preſently the aſſemblage diſperſed; and Ellena, curious to underſtand the occaſion of what ſhe had obſerved, prepared to deſcend to the convent.

She had left the terrace, and was about to enter a long avenue of cheſnuts that

extended to a part of the convent, communicating immediately with the great court, when ſhe heard approaching ſteps, and, on turning into the walk, perceived ſeveral perſons advancing in the ſhady diſtance. Among the voices, as they drew nearer, ſhe diſtinguiſhed one whoſe intereſting tone engaged all her attention, and began alſo to awaken memory. She liſtened, wondered, doubted, hoped, and feared! It ſpoke again! Ellena thought ſhe could not be deceived in thoſe tender accents, ſo full of intelligence, ſo expreſſive of ſenſibility and refinement. She proceeded with quicker ſteps, yet faltered as ſhe drew near the group, and pauſed to inquire whether among them was any figure that might accord with the voice, and juſtify her hopes.

The voice ſpoke again; it pronounced her name; pronounced it with the tremblings of tenderneſs and impatience, and Ellena ſcarcely dared to truſt her ſenſes, when

when ſhe beheld Olivia, the nun of San Stefano, in the cloiſters of La Piéta!

Ellena could find no words to expreſs her joy and ſurpriſe on beholding her preſerver in ſafety, and in theſe quiet groves; but Olivia repaid all the affectionate careſſes of her young friend, and, while ſhe promiſed to explain the circumſtance that had led to her preſent appearance here, ſhe, in her turn, made numerous inquiries relative to Ellena's adventures after ſhe had quitted San Stefano. They were now, however, ſurrounded by too many auditors to allow of unreſerved converſation; Ellena, therefore, led the nun to her apartment, and Olivia then explained her reaſons for having left the convent of San Stefano, which were indeed ſufficient to juſtify, even with the moſt rigid devotee, her conduct as to the change. This unfortunate recluſe, it appeared, perſecuted by the ſuſpicions of the abbeſs, who un-

derſtood that ſhe had aſſiſted in the liberation of Ellena, had petitioned the biſhop of her dioceſe for leave to remove to La Pieta. The abbeſs had not proof to proceed formally againſt her, as an accomplice in the eſcape of a novice, for though Jeronimo could have ſupplied the requiſite evidence, he was too deeply implicated in this adventure to do ſo without betraying his own conduct. From his having withheld ſuch proof, it appears, however, that accident rather than deſign had occaſioned his failure on the evening of Ellena's departure from the monaſtery. But, though the abbeſs had not teſtimony enough for legal puniſhment, ſhe was acquainted with circumſtances ſufficient to juſtify ſuſpicion, and had both the inclination and the power to render Olivia very miſerable.

In her choice of La Piéta, the nun was influenced by many conſiderations, ſome of which were the conſequence of

converſations ſhe had held with Ellena reſpecting the ſtate of that ſociety. Her deſign ſhe had been unable to diſcloſe to her friend, leſt, by a diſcovery of ſuch correſpondence, the abbeſs of San Stefano ſhould obtain grounds on which to proceed againſt her. Even in her appeal to the biſhop the utmoſt caution and ſecrecy had been neceſſary, till the order for her removal, procured not without conſiderable delay and difficulty, arrived, and when it came, the jealous anger of the ſuperior rendered an immediate departure neceſſary.

Olivia, during many years, had been unhappy in her local circumſtances, but it is probable ſhe would have concluded her days within the walls of San Stefano, had not the aggravated oppreſſion of the abbeſs aroufed her courage and activity, and diſſipated the deſpondency, with which ſevere misfortune had obſcured her views.

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Ellena was particular in her inquiries whether any perſon of the monaſtery had ſuffered for the aſſiſtance they had given her; and learning that not one, except Olivia, had been even ſuſpected of befriending her, ſhe underſtood, that the venerable friar, who had dared to unfaſten the gate which reſtored her with Vivaldi to liberty, had not been involved by his kindneſs.

"It is an embarraſſing and rather an unuſual circumſtance," concluded Olivia, "to change one's convent; but you perceive the ſtrong reaſons which determined me upon a removal. I was, however, perhaps, the more impatient of ſevere treatment, ſince you, my ſiſter, had deſcribed to me the ſociety of *Our Lady of Pity*, and ſince I believed it poſſible that you might form a part of it. When, on my arrival here, I learned that my wiſhes had not deceived me on this point, I was impatient to ſee you once more, and as ſoon as

the ceremonies attending an introduction to the ſuperior were over, I requeſted to be conducted to you, and was in ſearch of you when we met in the avenue. It is unneceſſary for me to inſiſt upon the ſatisfaction which this meeting gives me; but you may not, perhaps, underſtand how much the manners of our lady abbeſs, and of the ſiſterhood in general, as far as a firſt interview will allow me to judge of them, have re-animated me. The gloom, which has long hung over my proſpects, ſeems now to open, and a diſtant gleam promiſes to light up the evening of my ſtormy day."

Olivia pauſed and appeared to recollect herſelf; this was the firſt time ſhe had made ſo direct a reference to her own misfortunes; and, while Ellena ſilently remarked it, and obſerved the dejection, which was already ſtealing upon the expreſſive countenance of the nun, ſhe wiſhed, yet feared to lead her back towards the ſubject of them.

Endeavouring to diſmiſs ſome painful remembrance, and aſſuming a ſmile of languid gaiety, Olivia ſaid, "Now that I have related the hiſtory of my removal, and ſufficiently indulged my egotiſm, will you let me hear what adventures have befallen you, my young friend, ſince the melancholy adieu you gave me in the gardens of San Stefano."

This was a taſk, to which Ellena's ſpirits, though revived by the preſence of Olivia, were ſtill unequal. Over the ſcenes of her paſt diſtreſs Time had not yet drawn his ſhadowing veil; the colours were all too freſh and gariſh for the meek dejection of her eye, and the ſubject was too intimately connected with that of her preſent anxiety, to be reviewed without very painful feelings. She therefore requeſted Olivia to ſpare her from a detail of particulars, which ſhe could not recollect but with extreme reluctance; and, ſcrupulouſly obſerving the injunction of

Schedoni,

Schedoni, ſhe merely mentioned her ſeparation from Vivaldi upon the banks of the Celano, and that a variety of diſtreſſing circumſtances had intervened before ſhe could regain the ſanctuary of della Pieta.

Olivia underſtood too well the kind of ſeelings, from which Ellena was deſirous of eſcaping, willingly to ſubject her to a renewal of them; and felt too much generous compaſſion for her ſufferings not to endeavour to ſoothe the ſenſe of them by an exertion of thoſe delicate and nameleſs arts which, while they mock detection, faſcinate the weary ſpirit as by a charm of magic!

The friends continued in converſation, till a chime from a chapel of the convent ſummoned them to the laſt veſpers; and, when the ſervice had concluded, they ſeparated for the night.

With the ſociety of La Piéta, Olivia had thus found an aſylum ſuch

as till lately ſhe had never dared to hope for; but, though ſhe frequently expreſſed her ſenſe of this bleſſing, it was ſeldom without tears; and Ellena obſerved, with ſome ſurpriſe and more diſappointment, within a very few days after her arrival, a cloud of melancholy ſpreading again over her mind.

But a nearer intereſt ſoon withdrew Ellena's attention from Olivia to fix it upon Vivaldi; and, when ſhe ſaw her infirm old ſervant, Beatrice, enter a chamber of the convent, ſhe anticipated that the knowledge of ſome extraordinary, and probably unhappy, event had brought her. She knew too well the circumſpection of Schedoni to believe that Beatrice came commiſſioned from him; and as the uncertain ſituation of Vivaldi was ſo conſtantly the ſubject of her anxiety, ſhe immediately concluded that her ſervant came to announce ſome evil relative to him.—His indiſpoſition, perhaps his actual con-

finement in the Inquiſition, which lately ſhe had ſometimes been inclined to think might not have been a mere menace to Vivaldi, though it had proved to be no more to herſelf;—or poſſibly ſhe came to tell of his death—his death in thoſe priſons! This laſt was a poſſibility that almoſt incapacitated her for inquiring what was the errand of Beatrice.

The old ſervant, trembling and wan, either from the fatigue of her walk, or from a conſciouſneſs of diſaſtrous intelligence, ſeated herſelf without ſpeaking, and ſome moments elapſed before ſhe could be prevailed with to anſwer the repeated inquiries of Ellena.

"O Signora!" ſaid ſhe, at length, "you do not know what it is to walk up hill ſuch a long way, at my age! Well! heaven protect you, I hope you never will!"

"I perceive you bring ill news," ſaid Ellena; "I am prepared for it, and you need not fear to tell me all you know."

"Holy San Marco!" exclaimed Beatrice, "if death be ill news, you have gueſſed right, Signora, for I do bring news of that, it is certain. How came you, Lady, to know my errand? They have been beforehand with me, I ſee, though I have not walked ſo faſt up hill this many a day, as I have now, to tell you what has happened."

She ſtopped on obſerving the changing countenance of Ellena, who tremulouſly called upon her to explain what had happened — who was dead; and entreated her to relate the particulars as ſpeedily as poſſible.

"You ſaid you was prepared, Signora," ſaid Beatrice, "but your looks tell another tale."—

"What is the event you would diſcloſe?" ſaid Ellena, almoſt breathleſs. "When did it happen?—be brief."

"I cannot tell exactly when it happened, Signora, but it was an own ſervant

ſervant of the Marcheſe's that I had it from."

"The Marcheſe's?" interrupted Ellena in a faltering voice.

"Aye, Lady; you will ſay that is pretty good authority."

"Death! and in the Marcheſe's family!" exclaimed Ellena.

"Yes, Signora, I had it from his own ſervant. He was paſſing by the garden-gate juſt as I happened to be ſpeaking to the maccaroni-man.—But you are ill, Lady!"

"I am very well, if you will but proceed," replied Ellena, faintly, while her eyes were fixed upon Beatrice, as if they only had power to enforce her meaning.

"'Well, dame, he ſays to me, 'I have not ſeen you of a long time.'—'No,' ſays I, 'that is a great grievance truly! for old women now-a-days are not much thought of; out of ſight out of mind with them, now-a-days!"—

"I be-

"I beſeech you to the purpoſe," interrupted Ellena. "Whoſe death did he announce?" She had not courage to pronounce Vivaldi's name.

"You ſhall hear, Signora. I ſaw he looked in a ſort of a buſtle, ſo I aſked him how all did at the Palazzo: ſo he anſwers, 'Bad enough, Signora Beatrice, have not you heard?'—'Heard,' ſays I; 'what ſhould I have heard?'—'Why,' ſays he, 'of what has juſt happened in our family."

"O heavens!" exclaimed Elllena, "he is dead! Vivaldi is dead!"

"You ſhall hear, Signora," continued Beatrice.

"Be brief!" ſaid Ellena, "anſwer me ſimply yes or no."

"I cannot, till I come to the right place, Signora; if you will but have a little patience, you ſhall hear all. But if you fluſter me ſo, you will put me quite out."

"Grant me patience!" ſaid Ellena, endeavouring to calm her ſpirits.

"With

"With that, Signora, I aſked him to walk in and reſt himſelf, and tell me all about it. He anſwered, he was in a great hurry, and could not ſtay a moment, and a great deal of that ſort; but I, knowing that whatever happened in that family, Signora, was ſomething to you, would not let him go off ſo eaſily; and ſo, when I aſked him to refreſh himſelf with a glaſs of lemon-ice, he forgot all his buſineſs in a minute, and we had a long chat."

And Beatrice might now have continued her circumlocution, perhaps as long as ſhe had pleaſed, for Ellena had loſt all power to urge inquiry, and was ſcarcely ſenſible of what was ſaid. She neither ſpoke, nor ſhed a tear; the one image that poſſeſſed her fancy, the image of Vivaldi dead, ſeemed to hold all her faculties, as by a ſpell.

"So when I aſked him," added Beatrice, "again what had happened, he was ready enough

enough to tell all about it. 'It is near a month ago,' ſaid he, 'ſince ſhe was firſt taken; the Marcheſa had been"——

"The Marcheſa!" repeated Ellena, with whom that one word had diſſolved the ſpell of terror—"the Marcheſa!"

"Yes, Signora, to be ſure. Who elſe did I ſay it was!"

"Go on, Beatrice; the Marcheſa?—

"What makes you look ſo glad all of a ſudden, Signora? I thought juſt now you was very ſorry about it. What! I warrant you was thinking about my young lord, Vivaldi."

"Proceed," ſaid Ellena.

"Well!" added Beatrice, 'It was about a month ago that the Marcheſa was firſt taken,' continued the varlet. 'She had ſeemed poorly a long time, but it was from a *converſazione* at the di Voglio Palazzo, that ſhe came home ſo ill. It is ſuppoſed ſhe had been long in a bad ſtate of health, but nobody thought her ſo near

her

her end, till the doctors were called together; and then matters looked very bad indeed. They found out that she had been dying, or as good, for many years, though nobody else had suspected it, and the Marchesa's own physician was blamed for not finding it out before. But he,' added the rogue, 'had a regard for my lady. He was very obstinate, too, for he kept saying almost to the last, there was no danger, when every body else saw how it was going. The other doctors soon made their words good, and my lady died."

"And her son"—said Ellena, "was he with the Marchesa when she expired?"

"What, Signor Vivaldi, lady? No, the Signor was not there."

"This is very extraordinary!" observed Ellena with emotion. "Did the servant mention him?"

"Yes, Signora; he said what a sad thing it was that he should be out of the way.

way at that time, and nobody know where !"

" Are his family then ignorant where he is ?" aſked Ellena, with increaſed emotion.

" To be ſure they are, lady, and have been for theſe many weeks. They have heard nothing at all of the Signor, nor of one Paulo Mendrico, his ſervant, though the Marcheſe's people have been riding poſt after them from one end of the kingdom to the other all the time."

Shocked with the conviction of a circumſtance, which, till lately, ſhe ſcarcely believed was poſſible, the impriſonment of Vivaldi in the Inquiſition, Ellena loſt for a while all power of further inquiry; but Beatrice proceeded.

" The Lady Marcheſa ſeemed to lay ſomething much to heart, as the man told me, and often inquired for Signor Vincentio."

" The Marcheſa you are ſure then was ignorant where he was ?" ſaid Ellena, with

with new aſtoniſhment and perplexity as to the perſon who, after betraying him into the Inquiſition, could yet have ſuffered her, though arreſted at the ſame time, to eſcape.

"Yes, Signora, for ſhe wanted ſadly to ſee him. And when ſhe was dying, ſhe ſent for her Confeſſor, one father Schedoni, I think they call him, and"—

"What of him," ſaid Ellena, incautiouſly.

"Nothing, Signora, for he could not be found."

"Not be found!" repeated Ellena.

"No, Signora, not juſt then; he was Confeſſor, I warrant, to other people beſide the Marcheſa, and I dare ſay they had ſins enough to confeſs, ſo he could not get away in a hurry."

Ellena recollected herſelf ſufficiently to aſk no further of Schedoni; and, when ſhe conſidered the probable cauſe of Vivaldi's arreſt, ſhe was again conſoled by a hope that

that he had not fallen into the power of real officials, ſince the comrades of the men who had arreſted him had proved themſelves otherwiſe; and ſhe thought it highly probable, that, while undiſcovered by his family, he had been, and was ſtill engaged in ſearching for the place of her confinement.

"But I was ſaying," proceeded Beatrice, "what a buſtle there was when my lady, the Marcheſa, was dying. As this father Schedoni was not to be found, another Confeſſor was ſent for, and ſhut up with her for a long while indeed! And then my Lord Marcheſe was called in, and there ſeemed to be a deal going forward, for my lord was heard every now and then by the attendants in the antechamber, talking loud, and ſometimes my Lady Marcheſa's voice was heard too, though ſhe was ſo ill! At laſt all was ſilent, and after ſome time my Lord came out of the room, and he ſeemed very much fluſtered, they

they ſay, that is, very angry and yet very ſorrowful. But the Confeſſor remained with my Lady for a long while after; and, when he departed, my Lady appeared more unhappy than ever. She lived all that night and part of the next day, and ſomething ſeemed to lie very heavy at her heart, for ſhe ſometimes wept, but oftener groaned, and would look ſo, that it was piteous to ſee her. She frequently aſked for the Marcheſe, and when he came, the attendants were ſent away, and they held long conferences by themſelves. The Confeſſor alſo was ſent for again, juſt at the laſt, and they were all ſhut up together. After this, my Lady appeared more eaſy in her mind, and not long after ſhe died."

Ellena, who had attended cloſely to this little narrative, was prevented for the preſent from aſking the few queſtions which it had ſuggeſted, by the entrance of Olivia, who, on perceiving a ſtranger, was retiring, but Ellena, not conſidering

theſe

theſe inquiries as important, prevailed with the nun to take a chair at the embroidery frame ſhe had lately quitted.

After converſing for a few moments with Olivia, ſhe returned to a conſideration of her own intereſts. The abſence of Schedoni ſtill appeared to her as ſomething more than accidental; and, though ſhe could not urge any inquiry with Beatrice concerning the monk of the Spirito Santo, ſhe ventured to aſk whether ſhe had lately ſeen the ſtranger, who had reſtored her to Altieri, for Beatrice knew him only in the character of Ellena's deliverer.

"No, Signora," replied Beatrice rather ſharply, "I have never ſeen his face ſince he attended you to the villa, though for that matter, I did not ſee much of it there; and then how he contrived to let himſelf out of the houſe that night without my ſeeing him, I cannot divine, though I have thought of it often enough ſince! I am ſure

he need not to have been aſhamed to have ſhewn his face to me, for I ſhould only have bleſſed him for bringing you ſafe home again !"

Ellena was ſomewhat ſurprized to find that Beatrice had noticed a circumſtance apparently ſo trivial, and replied, that ſhe had herſelf opened the door for her protector.

While Beatrice ſpoke, Olivia raiſing her eyes from the embroidery, had fixed them upon the old ſervant, who reſpectfully withdrew her's ; but, when the nun was again engaged on her work, ſhe reſumed her obſervation. Ellena fancied ſhe perceived ſomething extraordinary in this mutual examination, although the curioſity of ſtrangers towards each other might have accounted for it.

Beatrice then received directions from Ellena as to ſome drawings, which ſhe wiſhed to have ſent to the convent, and when the ſervant ſpoke in reply, Olivia

again

again raiſed her eyes, and fixed them on her face with intenſe curioſity.

"I certainly ought to know that voice," ſaid the nun with great emotion, "though I dare not judge from your features. Is it,—can it be poſſible!—is it Beatrice Olca to whom I ſpeak? So many years have paſſed"——

Beatrice with equal ſurprize anſwered, "It is, Signora; you are right in my name. But, lady, who are you that know me?"

While ſhe earneſtly regarded Olivia, there was an expreſſion of diſmay in her look, which increaſed Ellena's perplexity. The nun's complexion varied every inſtant, and her words failed when ſhe attempted to ſpeak. Beatrice meanwhile exclaimed, "My eyes deceive me! yet there is a ſtrange likeneſs. Santa della Piéta! how it has fluttered me! my heart beats ſtill—you are ſo like her, lady, yet you are very different too."

Olivia,

Olivia, whoſe regards were now entirely fixed upon Ellena, ſaid in a voice that was ſcarcely articulate, while her whole frame ſeemed ſinking beneath ſome irreſiſtible feeling, "Tell me, Beatrice, I conjure you, quickly ſay, who is this?"—— She pointed to Ellena, and the ſentence died on her lips.

Beatrice, wholly occupied by intereſts of her own, gave no reply, but exclaimed, "It is in truth the Lady Olivia! It is herſelf! In the name of all that is ſacred, how came you here? O! how glad you muſt have been to find one another out!" She looked, ſtill gaſping with aſtoniſhment, at Olivia, while Ellena, unheard, repeatedly inquired the meaning of her words, and in the next moment found herſelf preſſed to the boſom of the nun, who ſeemed better to have underſtood them, and who weeping, trembling, and almoſt fainting, held her there in ſilence.

Ellena, after ſome moments had thus paſſed, requeſted an explanation of what

ſhe witneſſed, and Beatrice at the ſame time demanded the cauſe of all this emotion. "For can it be that you did not know one another?" ſhe added.

"What new diſcovery is this?" ſaid Ellena, fearfully to the nun. "It is but lately that I have found my father! O tell me by what tender name I am to call you?"

"Your father!" exclaimed Olivia.

"Your father, lady!" echoed Beatrice.

Ellena, betrayed by ſtrong emotion into this premature mention of Schedoni, was embarraſſed and remained ſilent.

"No, my child!" ſaid Olivia, ſoftening from amazement into tones of ineffable ſorrow, while ſhe again preſſed Ellena to her heart—"No!—thy father is in the grave!"

Ellena no longer returned her careſſes; ſurprize and doubt ſuſpended every tender emotion; ſhe gazed upon Olivia with an intenſeneſs that partook of wildneſs. At

length ſhe ſaid ſlowly—" It is my mother, then, whom I ſee! When will theſe diſcoveries end!"

" It is your mother!" replied Olivia ſolemnly, " a mother's bleſſing reſts with you!"

The nun endeavoured to ſoothe the agitated ſpirits of Ellena, though ſhe was herſelf nearly overwhelmed by the various and acute feelings this diſcloſure occaſioned. For a conſiderable time they were unable to ſpeak but in ſhort ſentences of affectionate exclamation, but joy was evidently a more predominant feeling with the parent than with the child. When, however, Ellena could weep, ſhe became more tranquil, and by degrees was ſenſible to a degree of happineſs ſuch as ſhe had perhaps never experienced.

Meanwhile Beatrice ſeemed loſt in amazement mingled with fear. She expreſſed no pleaſure, notwithſtanding the the joy ſhe witneſſed, but was uniformly grave and obſervant.

Olivia, when ſhe recovered ſome degree of compoſure, inquired for her ſiſter Bianchi. The ſilence and ſudden dejection of Ellena indicated the truth. On this mention of her late miſtreſs, Beatrice recovered the uſe of ſpeech.

"Alas! lady," ſaid the old ſervant, "ſhe is now where I believed you were! and I ſhould as ſoon have expected to ſee my dear miſtreſs here as yourſelf!"

Olivia, though affected by this intelligence, did not feel it with the acuteneſs ſhe would have done probably at any other moment. After ſhe had indulged he tears, ſhe added, that from the unuſual ſilence of Bianchi, ſhe had ſuſpected the truth, and particularly ſince not any anſwer had been returned to the letter ſhe had ſent to Altieri upon her arrival at the Santa della Piéta.

"Alas!" ſaid Beatrice, "I wonder much my lady abbeſs failed to tell you the ſad news, for ſhe knew it too well!—

My dear miſtreſs is buried in the church here! as for the letter, I have brought it with me for Signora Ellena to open."

"The lady abbeſs is not informed of our relationſhip," replied Olivia. "and I have particular reaſons for wiſhing that at preſent ſhe ſhould remain ignorant of it. Even you, my Ellena, muſt appear only as my friend, till ſome inquiries have been made, which are eſſential to my peace."

Olivia aſked an explanation of Ellena's late extraordinary aſſertion reſpecting her father, but this was a requeſt made with emotions very different from thoſe which hope or joy inſpire. Ellena, believing that the ſame circumſtances which had deceived herſelf during ſo many years, as to his death, had alſo miſled Olivia, was not ſurpriſed at the incredulity her mother had ſhewn, but ſhe was conſiderably embarraſſed how to anſwer her inquiries. It was now too late to obſerve the promiſe of ſecrecy extorted from her

by Schedoni; the firſt moments of ſurprize had betrayed her; yet, while ſhe trembled further to tranſgreſs his injunction, ſhe perceived that a full explanation was now unavoidable. And, ſince Ellena conſidered, that as Schedoni could not have foreſeen her preſent peculiar ſituation, his command had no reference to her mother, her ſcruples on this head diſappeared. When, therefore, Beatrice had withdrawn, Ellena repeated her aſſertion, that her father ſtill lived; which, though it increaſed the amazement of Olivia, did not vanquiſh her incredulity. Olivia's tears flowed faſt, while in contradiction to this aſſurance, ſhe mentioned the year in which the Count di Bruno died, with ſome circumſtances relative to his death; which, however, as Ellena underſtood that her mother had not witneſſed it, ſhe ſtill believed had not happened. To confirm her late aſſertion, Ellena then related a few particulars of her ſecond

interview

interview with Schedoni, and, as ſome confirmation that he lived, offered to produce the portrait, which he had claimed as his own. Olivia, in great agitation, requeſted to ſee the miniature, and Ellena left the apartment in ſearch of it.

Every moment of her abſence was to Olivia's expectation lengthened to an hour; ſhe paced the room; liſtened for a footſtep; endeavoured to tranquilize her ſpirits, and ſtill Ellena did not return. Some ſtrange myſtery ſeemed to lurk in the narrative ſhe had juſt heard, which ſhe wiſhed, yet dreaded to develope; and when, at length, Ellena appeared with the miniature, ſhe took it in trembling eagerneſs, and having gazed upon it for an inſtant, her complexion faded, and ſhe fainted.

Ellena had now no doubt reſpecting the truth of Schedoni's declaration, and blamed herſelf for not having more gradually prepared her mother for the knowledge of

a circumſtance, which ſhe believed had overwhelmed her with joy. The uſual applications, however, ſoon reſtored Olivia, who, when ſhe was again alone with her daughter, deſired to behold once more the portrait. Ellena, attributing the ſtrong emotion, with which ſhe ſtill regarded it, to ſurprize, and fear leſt ſhe was admitting a fallacious hope, endeavoured to comfort her by renewed aſſurances, that not only the Count di Bruno yet exiſted, but that he lived at this very time in Naples, and further, that he would probably be in her preſence within the hour; "When I quitted the room for the miniature," added Ellena, "I diſpatched a perſon with a note, requeſting to ſee my father immediately, being impatient to realize the joy, which ſuch a meeting between my long loſt parents muſt occaſion."

In this inſtance Ellena had certainly ſuffered her generous ſympathy to overcome her diſcretion, for, though the contents

tents of the note to Schedoni could not poſitively have betrayed him, had he even been in Naples at this time, her ſending it to the Spirito Santo, inſtead of the place which he had appointed for his letters, might have led to a premature diſcovery reſpecting herſelf.

While Ellena had acquainted Olivia that Schedoni would probably be with them ſoon, ſhe watched eagerly for the joyful ſurprize ſhe expected would appear on her countenance; how ſevere then was her diſappointment when only terror and diſmay were expreſſed there! and, when, in the next moment, her mother uttered exclamations of diſtreſs and even of deſpair!

"If he ſees me," ſaid Olivia, "I am irrecoverably loſt! O! unhappy Ellena! your precipitancy has deſtroyed me. The original of this portrait is not the Count di Bruno, *my* dear lord, nor your parent, but his brother, the cruel huſband"——

Olivia left the ſentence unfiniſhed, as if ſhe was betraying more than was at preſent diſcreet; but Ellena, whom aſoniſhment had kept ſilent, now entreated that ſhe would explain her words, and the cauſe of her diſtreſs.

"I know not," ſaid Olivia, "by what means that portrait has been conveyed to you; but it is the reſemblance of the Count Ferando di Bruno, the brother of my lord, and my"——ſecond huſband ſhe ſhould have ſaid, but her lips refuſed to honour him with the title.

She pauſed and was much affected, but preſently added—

"I cannot at preſent explain the ſubject more fully, for it is to me a very diſtreſſing one. Let me rather conſider the means of avoiding an interview with di Bruno, and even of concealing, if poſſible, that I exiſt."

Olivia was, however, ſoothed when ſhe underſtood that Ellena had not named her

in

in the note, but had merely deſired to ſee the Confeſſor upon a very particular occaſion.

While they were conſulting upon the excuſe it would be neceſſary to form for this imprudent ſummons, the meſſenger returned with the note unopened, and with information, that father Schedoni was abroad on a pilgrimage, which was the explanation the brothers of the Spirito Santo choſe to give of his abſence; judging it prudent, for the honour of their convent, to conceal his real ſituation.

Olivia, thus releaſed from her fears, conſented to explain ſome points of the ſubject ſo intereſting to Ellena; but it was not till ſeveral days after this diſcovery, that ſhe could ſufficiently command her ſpirits to relate the whole of her narrative. The firſt part of it agreed perfectly with the account delivered in the confeſſion to the penitentiary Anſaldo; that which follows was known only to herſelf, her ſiſter

Bianchi, a phyſician, and one faithful ſervant, who had been conſiderably entruſted with the conduct of the plan.

It may be recollected that Schedoni left his houſe immediately after the act, which was deſigned to be fatal to the Counteſs his wife, and that ſhe was carried ſenſeleſs to her chamber. The wound, as appears, was not mortal. But the atrocity of the intent determined her to ſeize the opportunity thus offered by the abſence of Schedoni, and her own peculiar circumſtances, to releaſe herſelf from his tyranny without having recourſe to a court of juſtice, which would have covered with infamy the brother of her firſt huſband. She withdrew, therefore, from his houſe for ever, and, with the aſſiſtance of the three perſons beforementioned, retired to a remote part of Italy, and ſought refuge in the convent of San Stefano, while at home the report of her death was confirmed by a public funeral.

Bianchi

Bianchi remained for ſome time after the departure of Olivia, in her own reſidence near the Villa di Bruno, having taken under her immediate care the daughter of the Counteſs and of the firſt Count di Bruno, as well as an infant daughter of the ſecond.

After ſome time had elapſed, Bianchi withdrew with her young charge, but not to the neighbourhood of San Stefano. The indulgence of a mother's tenderneſs was denied to Olivia, for Bianchi could not reſide near the convent without ſubjecting her to the hazard of a diſcovery, ſince Schedoni, though he now believed the report of her death, might be led to doubt it, by the conduct of Bianchi, whoſe ſteps would probably be obſerved by him. She choſe a reſidence, therefore, at a diſtance from Olivia, though not yet at Altieri. At this period, Ellena was not two years old; the daughter of Schedoni was ſcarcely as many months, and ſhe died

before

before the year concluded. It was this his child, for whom the Confeſſor, who had too well concealed himſelf to permit Bianchi to acquaint him with her death, had miſtaken Ellena, and to which miſtake his own portrait, affirmed by Ellena to be that of her father, had contributed. This miniature ſhe had found in the cabinet of Bianchi after her aunt's deceaſe, and, obſerving it inſcribed with the title of Count di Bruno, ſhe had worn it with a filial fondneſs ever ſince that period.

Bianchi, when ſhe had acquainted Ellena with the ſecret of her birth, was withheld, both by prudence and humanity, from entruſting her with a knowledge that her mother lived; but this, no doubt, was the circumſtance ſhe appeared ſo anxious to diſcloſe on her death-bed, when the ſuddenneſs of her diſorder had deprived her of the power. The abruptneſs of that event had thus contributed to keep the mother and daughter unknown to each

each other, even when they afterwards accidentally met, to which concealment the name of Roſalba, given to Ellena from her infancy by Bianchi, for the purpoſe of protecting her from diſcovery by her uncle, had aſſiſted. Beatrice, who was not the domeſtic intruſted with the eſcape of Olivia, had believed the report of her death, and thus, though ſhe knew Ellena to be the daughter of the Counteſs di Bruno, ſhe could never have been a means of diſcovering them to each other, had it not happened that Olivia recognized this ancient ſervant of Bianchi, while Ellena was preſent.

When Bianchi came to reſide in the neighbourhood of Naples, ſhe was unſuſpicious that Schedoni, who had never been heard of ſince the night of the aſſaſſination, inhabited there; and ſhe ſo ſeldom left her houſe, that it is not ſurprizing ſhe ſhould never happen to meet him, at leaſt conſciouſly; for her veil,

and

and the monk's cowl, might eaſily have concealed them from each other if they had met.

It appears to have been the intention of Bianchi to diſcloſe to Vivaldi the family of Ellena, before their nuptials were ſolemnized; ſince, on the evening of their laſt converſation, ſhe had declared, when her ſpirits were exhauſted by the exertion ſhe had made, that much remained for her to ſay, which weakneſs obliged her to defer till another opportunity. Her unexpected death prevented any future meeting. That ſhe had not ſooner intended to make a communication, which might have removed, in a conſiderable degree, the objection of the Vivaldi to a connection with Ellena, appears extraordinary, till other circumſtances of her family than that of its nobility are conſidered. Her preſent indigence, and yet more, the guilt attached to an individual of the di Bruno, it was reaſonable to ſuppoſe would operate as a

full

ſull antidote to the allurement of rank, however jealous of birth the Vivaldi had proved themſelves.

Ferando di Bruno had contrived, even in the ſhort interval between the death of his brother and the ſuppoſed deceaſe of his wife, again to embarraſs his affairs, and ſoon after his flight, the income ariſing from what remained of his landed property had been ſeized upon by his creditors, whether lawfully or not, he was then in a ſituation which did not permit him to conteſt, and Ellena was thus left wholly dependent upon her aunt. The ſmall fortune of Bianchi had been diminiſhed by the aſſiſtance ſhe afforded Olivia, for whoſe admittance into the convent of San Stefano it had been neceſſary to advance a conſiderable ſum; and her original income was afterwards reduced by the purchaſe of the villa Altieri. This expenditure, however, was not an imprudent one, ſince ſhe preferred the comforts

comforts and independence of a pleaſant home, with induſtry, to the indulgence of an indolence which muſt have confined her to an inferior reſidence; and was acquainted with the means of making this induſtry profitable without being diſhonourable. She excelled in many elegant and ingenious arts, and the productions of her pencil and needle were privately diſpoſed of to the nuns of La Pieta. When Ellena was of an age to aſſiſt her, ſhe reſigned much of the employment and the profit to her niece, whoſe genius having unfolded itſelf, the beauty of her deſigns and the elegance of her execution, both in drawings and embroidery, were ſo highly valued by the purchaſers at the grate of the convent, that Bianchi committed to Ellena altogether the exerciſe of her art.

Olivia meanwhile had dedicated her life to devotion in the monaſtery of San Stefano, a choice which was willingly made

while

while her mind was yet ſoftened by grief for the death of her firſt lord, and wearied by the cruelty ſhe had afterwards experienced. The firſt years of her retirement were paſſed in tranquility, except when the remembrance of her child, whom ſhe did not dare to ſee at the convent, awakened a parental pang. With Bianchi ſhe, however, correſponded as regularly as opportunity would allow, and had at leaſt the conſolation of knowing, that the object moſt dear to her lived, till, within a ſhort period of Ellena's arrival at the very aſylum choſen by her mother, her apprehenſions were in ſome degree excited by the unuſual ſilence of Bianchi.

When Olivia had firſt ſeen Ellena in the chapel of San Stefano, ſhe was ſtruck with a ſlight reſemblance ſhe bore to the late Count di Bruno, and had frequently afterwards examined her features with a moſt painful curioſity; but, circumſtanced as ſhe was, Olivia could not reaſonably

ſuſpect

ſuſpect the ſtranger to be her daughter. Once, however, a ſenſe of this poſſibility ſo far overcame her judgment, as to prompt an inquiry for the ſurname of Ellena; but the mention of Roſalba had checked all further conjecture. What would have been the feelings of the nun, had ſhe been told when her generous compaſſion was aſſiſting a ſtranger to eſcape from oppreſſion, that ſhe was preſerving her own child! It may be worthy of obſervation, that the virtues of Olivia, exerted in a general cauſe, had thus led her unconſciouſly to the happineſs of ſaving her daughter; while the vices of Schedoni had as unconſciouſly urged him nearly to deſtroy his niece, and had always been preventing, by the means they prompted him to employ, the ſucceſs of his conſtant aim.

CHAP X.

"Thoſe hours, which lately ſmil'd, where are they now?
Pallid to thought and ghaſtly!"

YOUNG.

THE Marcheſa di Vivaldi, of whoſe death Beatrice had given an imperfect account, ſtruck with remorſe of the crime ſhe had meditated againſt Ellena, and with terror of the puniſhment due to it, had ſent, when on her death-bed, for a Confeſſor, to whom ſhe unburthened her conſcience, and from whom ſhe hoped to receive, in return, an alleviation of her deſpair. This Confeſſor was a man of good ſenſe and humanity; and, when he fully underſtood the ſtory of Vivaldi and Ellena di Roſalba, he declared, that her

her only hope of forgiveneſs, both for the crime ſhe had meditated, and the undeſerved ſufferings ſhe had occaſioned, reſted upon her willingneſs to make thoſe now happy, whom ſhe had formerly rendered miſerable. Her conſcience had already given her the ſame leſſon; and, now that ſhe was ſinking to that grave which levels all diſtinctions, and had her juſt fear of retribution no longer oppoſed by her pride, ſhe became as anxious to promote the marriage of Vivaldi with Ellena as ſhe had ever been to prevent it. She ſent, therefore, for the Marcheſe; and, having made an avowal of the arts ſhe had practiſed againſt the peace and reputation of Ellena, without, however confeſſing the full extent of her intended crimes, ſhe made it her laſt requeſt, that he would conſent to the happineſs of his ſon.

The Marcheſe, however, ſhocked as he was at this diſcovery of the duplicity and

and cruelty of his wife, had neither her terror of the future, or remorse for the past, to overcome his objection to the rank of Ellena; and he resisted all her importunity, till the anguish of her last hours vanquished every consideration but that of affording her relief; he then gave a solemn promise, in the presence of the Confessor, that he would no longer oppose the marriage of Vivaldi and Ellena, should the former persist in his attachment to her. This promise was sufficient for the Marchesa, and she died with some degree of resignation. It did not, however, appear probable, that the Marchese would soon be called upon to fulfil the engagements, into which he had so unwillingly entered, every inquiry after Vivaldi having been hitherto ineffectual.

During the progress of this fruitless search for his son, and while the Marchese was almost lamenting him as dead, the inhabitants of the Vivaldi palace were,

were one night arouſed from ſleep by a violent knocking at the great gate of the court. The noiſe was ſo loud and inceſſant, that, before the porter could obey the ſummons, the Marcheſe, whoſe apartment looked upon the court, was alarmed, and he ſent an attendant from his anteroom, to inquire the occaſion of it.

Preſently a voice was heard from the firſt ante-chamber, exclaiming, "I muſt ſee my Lord Marcheſe directly; he will not be angry to be waked, when he knows all about it;" and, before the Marcheſe could order that no perſon, on whatever pretence, ſhould be admitted, Paulo, haggard, ragged, and covered with dirt, was in the chamber. His wan and affrighted countenance, his diſordered dreſs, and his very attitude, as on entering he half turned to look back upon the ante-rooms, like one, who, juſt eſcaped from bondage, liſtens to the fancied ſounds of purſuit, were altogether,

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ſo ſtriking and terrific, that the Marcheſe, anticipating ſome dreadful news of Vivaldi, had ſcarcely power to inquire for him. Paulo, however, rendered queſtions unneceſſary; for, without any circumlocution, or preface, he immediately informed the Marcheſe, that the Signor, his dear maſter, was in the priſons of the Inquiſition, at Rome, if, indeed, they had not put an end to him before that time."

"Yes, my Lord," ſaid Paulo, "I am juſt got out myſelf, for they would not let me be with the Signor, ſo it was of no uſe to ſtay there any longer. Yet it was a hard matter with me to go away, and leave my dear maſter within thoſe diſmal walls; and nothing ſhould have perſuaded me to do ſo, but that I hoped, when your Lordſhip knew where the Signor was, you might be able to get him out. But there is not a minute to be loſt, my Lord, for when once a gentleman has

got within the claws of thoſe inquiſitors; there is no knowing how ſoon they may take it in their heads to tear him in pieces. Shall I order horſes for Rome, my Lord? I am ready to ſet off again directly."

The ſuddenneſs of ſuch intelligence, concerning an only ſon, might have agitated ſtronger nerves than thoſe of the Marcheſe, and ſo much was he ſhocked by it, that he could not immediately determine how to proceed, or give any anſwer to Paulo's repeated queſtions. When, however, he became ſufficiently recollected to make further inquiry into the ſituation of Vivaldi, he perceived the neceſſity of an immediate journey; but firſt it would be prudent to conſult with ſome friends, whoſe connections at Rome might be a means of greatly facilitating the important purpoſe, which led him thither, and this could not be done till the following morning. Yet he gave orders, that preparation ſhould be made

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for his ſetting out at a moment's notice; and, having liſtened to as full an account as Paulo could give of the paſt and preſent circumſtances of Vivaldi, he diſmiſſed him to repoſe for the remainder of the night.

Paulo, however, though much in want of reſt, was in too great an agitation of ſpirits either to ſeek or to find it; and the fear he had indicated, on entering the Marcheſe's apartment, proceeded from the hurry of his mind, rather than from any poſitive apprehenſion of new evil. For his liberty he was indebted to the young centinel, who had on a former occaſion been removed from the door of his priſon, but who, by means of the guard, to whom Vivaldi had given money, as he returned one night from the tribunal, had ſince been able to communicate with him. This man, of a nature too humane for his ſituation, was become wretched in it, and he deter-

mined to eſcape from his office before the expiration of the time, for which he had been engaged. He thought that to be a guard over priſoners was nearly as miſerable as being a priſoner himſelf. "I ſee no difference between them," ſaid he, except that the priſoner watches on one ſide of the door, and the centinel on the other."

With the reſolution to releaſe himſelf, he conferred with Paulo, whoſe good nature and feeling heart, among ſo many people of a contrary character, had won his confidence and affection, and he laid his plan of eſcape ſo well, that it was on the point of ſucceeding, when Paulo's obſtinacy in attempting an impoſſibility had nearly counteracted the whole. It went to his heart, he ſaid, to leave his maſter in priſon, while he himſelf was to march off in ſafety, and he would run the riſk of his neck, rather than have ſuch a deed upon his head. He pro-

propoſed, therefore, as Vivaldi's guards were of two ferocious a nature to be tampered with, to ſcale a wall of the court, into which a grate of Vivaldi's dungeon looked. But had this lofty wall been practicable, the grate was not; and the attempt had nearly coſt Paulo not only his liberty but his life.

When, at length, he had made his way through the perilous avenues of the priſon, and was fairly beyond the walls, he could hardly be prevailed upon by his companion to leave them. For near an hour, he wandered under their ſhade, weeping and exclaiming, and calling upon his dear maſter, at the evident hazard of being retaken; and probably would have remained there much longer, had not the dawn of morning rendered his companion deſperate. Juſt, however, as the man was forcing him away, Paulo fancied he diſtinguiſhed, by the ſtrengthening light, the roof of that particu-

lar building, in whoſe dungeon his maſter was confined, and the appearance of Vivaldi himſelf could ſcarcely have occaſioned a more ſudden burſt of joy; ſucceeded by one of grief. "It is the roof, it is the very roof!" exclaimed Paulo, vaulting from the ground, and clapping his hands; "it is the roof, the roof! O, my maſter, my maſter! the roof, the roof!" He continued alternately to exclaim, "My maſter! the roof! my maſter! the roof!" till his companion began to fear he was frantic, while tears ſtreamed down his cheeks, and every look and geſture expreſſed the moſt extravagant and whimſical union of joy and ſorrow. At length, the abſolute terror of diſcovery compelled his companion to force him from the ſpot; when, having loſt ſight of the building which incloſed Vivaldi, he ſet off for Naples with a ſpeed that defied all interruption, and arrived there in the condition which has

has been mentioned, having taken no ſleep, and ſcarcely any ſuſtenance, ſince he left the Inquiſition. Yet, though in this exhauſted ſtate, the ſpirit of his affection remained unbroken, and when, on the following morning, the Marcheſe quitted Naples, neither his wearineſs, nor the imminent danger, to which this journey muſt expoſe him, could prevent his attending him to Rome.

The rank of the Marcheſe, and the influence he was known to poſſeſs at the court of Naples, were circumſtances that promiſed to have weight with the Holy Office, and to procure Vivaldi a ſpeedy releaſe; but yet more than theſe were the high connections, which the Count di Maro, the friend of the Marcheſe, had in the church of Rome.

The applications, however, which were made to the inquiſitors, were not ſo ſoon replied to as the wiſhes of the Marcheſe had expected, and he had been above a

fortnight in that city, before he was even permitted to viſit his ſon. In this interview, affection predominated on both ſides over all remembrance of the paſt. The condition of Vivaldi, his faded appearance, to which the wounds he had received at Celano, and from which he was ſcarcely recovered, had contributed; and his ſituation in a melancholy and terrible priſon, were circumſtances that awakened all the tenderneſs of the father; his errors were forgiven, and the Marcheſe felt diſpoſed to conſent to all that might reſtore him to happineſs, could he but be reſtored to liberty.

Vivaldi, when informed of his mother's death, ſhed bitter tears of ſorrow and remorſe, for having occaſioned her ſo much uneaſineſs. The unreaſonableneſs of her claims was forgotten, and her faults were extenuated; happily, indeed, for his peace, the extent of her criminal deſigns he had never underſtood; and when he learned

that

that her dying requeſt had been intended to promote his happineſs, the cruel conſciouſneſs of having interrupted her's occaſioned him ſevere anguiſh, and he was obliged to recollect her former conduct towards Ellena at San Stefano before he could become reconciled to himſelf.

CHAP. XI.

"Your's in the ranks of death."

SHAKESPEARE.

NEAR three weeks had elapſed ſince the Marcheſe's arrival at Rome, and not any deciſive anſwer was returned by the Inquiſition to his application, when he and Vivaldi received at the ſame time a ſummons to attend father Schedoni in his dungeon. To meet the man who had occaſioned ſo much ſuffering to his family was extremely painful to the Marcheſe, but he was not allowed to refuſe the interview; and at the hour appointed he called at the chamber of Vivaldi; and, followed by two officials, they paſſed on together to that of Schedoni.

While

While they waited at the door of the priſon-room, till the numerous bars and locks were unfaſtened, the agitation, which Vivaldi had ſuffered, on receiving the ſummons, returned with redoubled force, now that he was about to behold, once more, that wretched man, who had announced himſelf to be the parent of Ellena di Roſalba. The Marcheſe ſuffered emotions of a different nature, and with his reluctance to ſee Schedoni was mingled a degree of curioſity as to the event, which had occaſioned this ſummons.

The door being thrown open, the officials entered firſt, and the Marcheſe and Vivaldi, on following, diſcovered the Confeſſor lying on a mattreſs. He did not riſe to receive them, but, as he lifted his head, and bowed it in obeiſance, his countenance, upon which the little light admitted through the triple grate of his dungeon gleamed, ſeemed more than uſually ghaſtly; his eyes were hollow,

and his ſhrunk features appeared as if death had already touched them. Vivaldi, on perceiving him, groaned, and averted his face; but, ſoon recovering a command of himſelf, he approached the mattreſs.

The Marcheſe, ſuppreſſing every expreſſion of reſentment towards an enemy, who was reduced to this deplorable condition, inquired what he had to communicate.

"Where is father Nicola?" ſaid Schedoni to an official, without attending to the queſtion: "I do not ſee him here. Is he gone ſo ſoon, and without having heard the purport of my ſummons? Let him be called."

The official ſpoke to a centinel, who immediately left the chamber.

"Who are theſe that ſurround me?" ſaid Schedoni. "Who is he that ſtands at the foot of the bed?" While he ſpoke, he bent his eyes on Vivaldi, who reſted

in deep dejection there, and was loſt in thought, till, aroufed by Schedoni's voice, he replied,

"It is I, Vincentio di Vivaldi; I obey your requifition, and inquire the purpoſe of it!"

The Marcheſe repeated the demand. Schedoni appeared to meditate; ſometimes he fixed his eyes upon Vivaldi, for an inſtant, and when he withdrew them, he ſeemed to ſink into deeper thoughtfulneſs. As he raiſed them once again, they aſſumed a ſingular expreſſion of wildneſs, and then ſettling, as if on a vacancy, a ſudden glare ſhot from them, while he ſaid—"Who is he, that glides there in the duſk?"

His eyes were directed beyond Vivaldi, who, on turning, perceived the monk, father Nicola, paſſing behind him.

"I am here," ſaid Nicola: "what do you require of me?"

"That you will bear teſtimony to the truth

truth of what I ſhall declare," replied Schedoni.

Nicola, and an inquiſitor who had accompanied him, immediately arranged themſelves on one ſide of the bed, while the Marcheſe ſtationed himſelf on the other. Vivaldi remained at its foot.

Schedoni, after a pauſe, began: "That which I have to make known relates to the cabal formerly carried on by him, the father Nicola, and myſelf, againſt the peace of an innocent young woman, whom, at my inſtigation, he has baſely traduced."

At theſe words, Nicola attempted to interrupt the Confeſſor, but Vivaldi reſtrained him.

"Ellena di Roſalba is known to you?" continued Schedoni, addreſſing the Marcheſe.

Vivaldi's countenance changed at this abrupt mention of Ellena, but he remained ſilent.

"I have

"I have heard of her," replied the Marcheſe, coldly.

"And you have heard falſely of her," rejoined Schedoni. "Lift your eyes, my lord Marcheſe, and ſay, do you not recollect that face?" pointing to Nicola.

The Marcheſe regarded the monk attentively, "It is a face not eaſily to be forgotten," he replied; "I remember to have ſeen it more than once."

"Where have you ſeen him, my Lord?"

"In my own palace, at Naples; and you yourſelf introduced him to me there."

"I did," replied Schedoni.

"Why, then, do you now accuſe him of falſehood," obſerved the Marcheſe, "ſince you acknowledge yourſelf to have been the inſtigator of his conduct?"

"O heavens!" ſaid Vivaldi, "this monk, then, this father Nicola, is, as I ſuſ-

ſuſpected, the ſlanderer of Ellena di Roſalba !"

"Moſt true," rejoined Schedoni; "and it is for the purpoſe of vindicating——"

"And you acknowledge yourſelf to be the author of thoſe infamous ſlanders !" paſſionately interrupted Vivaldi;—"you who but lately declared yourſelf to be her father !"

In the inſtant that Vivaldi had uttered this, he became ſenſible of his indiſcretion, for till now he had avoided informing the Marcheſe, that Ellena had been declared the daughter of Schedoni. This abrupt diſcloſure, and at ſuch a moment, he immediately perceived might be fatal to his hopes, and that the Marcheſe would not conſider the promiſe he had given to his dying wife, however ſolemn, as binding, under circumſtances ſo peculiar and unforeſeen as the preſent. The aſtoniſhment of the Marcheſe, upon this diſ-

diſcovery, cannot eaſily be imagined; he looked at his ſon for an explanation of what he had heard, and then with increaſed deteſtation on the Confeſſor; but Vivaldi was not in a ſtate of mind to give any explanation at this moment, and he requeſted his father to ſuſpend even his coujectures till he could converſe with him alone.

The Marcheſe deſiſted for the preſent from further inquiry, but it was obvious that his opinion and his reſolution, reſpecting the marriage of Vivaldi, were already formed.

"You, then, are the author of thoſe ſlanders!" repeated Vivaldi.

"Hear me!" cried Schedoni, in a voice which the ſtrength of his ſpirit contending with the feebleneſs of his condition, rendered hollow and terrible. —"Hear me!"

He ſtopped, unable to recover immediately from the effect of the exer-

tion he had made. At length, he reſumed,

"I have declared, and I continue to declare, that Ellena di Roſalba, as ſhe has been named, for the purpoſe, I conjecture, of concealing her from an unworthy father, is my daughter!"

Vivaldi groaned in the exceſs of his deſpair, but made no further attempt to interrupt Schedoni. The Marcheſe was not equally paſſive. "And was it to liſten to a vindication of your daughter," ſaid he, "that I have been ſummoned hither? But let this Signora Roſalba, be who ſhe may, of what importance can it be to me whether ſhe is innocent or otherwiſe!"

Vivaldi, with the utmoſt difficulty, forbore to expreſs the feelings, which this ſentence excited. It appeared to recall all the ſpirit of Schedoni. "She is the daughter of a noble houſe," ſaid the Confeſſor, haughtily, while he half raiſed him-

himſelf from his mattreſs. "In me you behold the laſt of the Counts di Bruno."

The Marcheſe ſmiled contemptuouſly.

Schedoni proceeded. "I call upon you, Nicola di Zampari, who have declared yourſelf, on a late occaſion, ſo ſtrenuous for juſtice; I call upon you now to do juſtice in this inſtance, and to acknowledge, before theſe witneſſes, that Ellena Roſalba is innocent of every circumſtance of miſconduct, which you have formerly related to the Marcheſe di Vivaldi!"

"Villain! do you heſitate," ſaid Vivaldi to Nicola, "to retract the cruel ſlanders, which you have thrown upon her name, and which have been the means of deſtroying her peace, perhaps for ever? Do you perſiſt——"

The Marcheſe interrupted his ſon:—"Let me put an end to the difficulty, by concluding the interview; I perceive that my preſence has been required for

for a purpoſe, that does not concern me."

Before the Confeſſor could reply, the Marcheſe had turned from him to quit the chamber; but the vehemence of Vivaldi's diſtreſs prevailed with him to pauſe, and thus allowed him to underſtand from Schedoni, that the juſtification of the innocent Ellena, though it had been mentioned firſt, as being the object neareſt to his heart, was not the only one, that had urged him to require this meeting.

"If you conſent," added Schedoni, "to liſten to the vindication of my child, you ſhall afterwards perceive, Signor, that I, fallen though I am, have ſtill been deſirous of counteracting, as far as remains for me, the evil I have occaſioned. You ſhall acknowledge, that what I then make known is of the utmoſt conſequence to the repoſe of the Marcheſe di Vivaldi, high in influence, and haughty in proſperity as he now appears."

The

The latter part of this aſſurance threatened to overcome the effect of the firſt; the pride of the Marcheſe ſwelled high; he took ſome ſteps towards the door, but then ſtopped, and, conjecturing that the ſubject, to which Schedoni alluded, concerned the liberation of his ſon, he conſented to attend to what Nicola ſhould diſcloſe.

This monk, meanwhile, had been balancing the neceſſity for acknowledging himſelf a ſlanderer, againſt the poſſibility of avoiding it; and it was the reſolute manner of Vivaldi, who appeared to have no doubt as to his guilt in this inſtance, that made him apprehend the conſequence of perſiſting in falſehood, not either remorſe of conſcience, or the appeal of Schedoni. He acknowledged then, after conſiderable circumlocution, in which he contrived to defend himſelf, by throwing all the odium of the original deſign upon the Confeſſor, that he had been

been prevailed upon by his arts to impoſe on the credulity of the Marcheſe, reſpecting the conduct of Ellena di Roſalba. This avowal was made upon oath, and Schedoni, by the queſtions he put to him, was careful it ſhould be ſo full and circumſtantial that even the moſt prejudiced hearer muſt have been convinced of its truth; while the moſt unfeeling muſt have yielded for once to indignation againſt the aſperſer, and pity of the aſperſed. Its effect upon the preſent auditors was various. The Marcheſe had liſtened to the whole explanation with an unmoved countenance, but with profound attention. Vivaldi had remained in a fixed attitude, with eyes bent on father Nicola, in ſuch eager and fiern regard, as ſeemed to ſearch into his very ſoul; and, when the monk concluded, a ſmile of triumphant joy lighted up his features, as he looked upon the Marcheſe, and claimed an acknowledgment of his conviction.

viction that Ellena had been calumniated. The cold glance, which the Marcheſe returned, ſtruck the impaſſioned and generous Vivaldi to the heart, who perceived that he was not only totally indifferent as to the injuſtice, which an innocent and helpleſs young woman had ſuffered, but fancied that he was unwilling to admit the truth, which his judgment would no longer allow him to reject.

Schedoni, meanwhile, appeared almoſt to writhe under the agony, which his mind inflicted upon him, and it was only by ſtrong efforts, that he ſuſtained his ſpirit ſo far as to go through with the interrogations he had judged it neceſſary to put to Nicola. When the ſubject was finiſhed, he ſunk back on his pillow, and cloſing his eyes, a hue ſo pallid, ſucceeded by one ſo livid, overſpread his features, that Vivaldi for an inſtant believed he was dying; and in this ſuppoſition he was not ſingular, for even an official was touched with

with the Confeſſor's condition, and had advanced to aſſiſt him, when he unclofed his eyes, and ſeemed to revive.

The Marcheſe, without making any comment upon the avowal of father Nicola, demanded, on its concluſion, the diſcloſure, which Schedoni had aſſerted to be intimately connected with his peace; and the latter now inquired of a perſon near him, whether a ſecretary of the Inquiſition was in the chamber, who he had requeſted might attend, to take a formal depoſition of what he ſhould declare. He was anſwered, that ſuch an one was already in waiting. He then aſked, what other perſons were in the room, adding, that he ſhould require inquiſitorial witneſſes to his depoſition; and was anſwered, that an inquiſitor and two officials were preſent, and that their evidence was more than ſufficient for his purpoſe.

A lamp was then called for by the ſecretary; but, as that could not immediately

diately be procured, the torch of one of the centinels, who watched in the dark avenue without, was brought in its ſtead, and this diſcovered to Schedoni the various figures aſſembled in his duſky chamber, and to them the emaciated form and ghaſtly viſage of the Confeſſor, As Vivaldi now beheld him by the ſtronger light of the torch, he again fancied that death was in his aſpect.

Every perſon was now ready for the declaration of Schedoni; but he himſelf ſeemed not fully prepared. He remained for ſome moments reclining on his pillow in ſilence, with his eyes ſhut, while the changes in his features indicated the ſtrong emotion of his mind. Then, as if by a violent effort, he half raiſed himſelf, and made an ample confeſſion of the arts he had practiſed againſt Vivaldi. He declared himſelf to be the anonymous accuſer, who had cauſed him to be arreſted by the Holy Office, and that the charge

of hereſy, which he had brought againſt him, was falſe and malicious.

At the moment when Vivaldi received this confirmation of his ſuſpicions, as to the identity of his accuſer, he diſcovered more fully that the charge was not what had been ſtated to him at the chapel of San Sebaſtian, in which Ellena was implicated; and he demanded an explanation of this circumſtance. Schedoni acknowledged, that the perſons, who had there arreſted him, were not officers of the Inquiſition, and that the inſtrument of arreſt, containing the charge of elopement with a nun, was forged by himſelf, for the purpoſe of empowering the ruffians to carry off Ellena, without oppoſition from the inhabitants of the convent, in which ſhe was then lodged.

To Vivaldi's inquiry, why it had been thought neceſſary to employ ſtratagem in the removal of Ellena, ſince, if Schedoni had only claimed her for his daughter, he

might have removed her without any, the Confeſſor replied, that he was then ignorant of the relationſhip which exiſted between them. But to the further inquiries, with what deſign, and whither Ellena had been removed, and the means by which he had diſcovered her to be his daughter, Schedoni was ſilent; and he ſunk back, overwhelmed by the recollections they awakened.

The depoſitions of Schedoni having been taken down by the ſecretary, were formally ſigned by the inquiſitor and the officials preſent; and Vivaldi thus ſaw his innocence vindicated by the very man who had thrown him among the perils of the Inquiſition. But the near proſpect of releaſe now before him failed to affect him with joy, while he underſtood that Ellena was the daughter of Schedoni, the child of a murderer, whom he himſelf had been in ſome degree inſtrumental in bringing to a dreadful and ignominious

death. Still, however, willing to hope, that Schedoni had not ſpoken the truth concerning his relationſhip to Ellena, he claimed, in conſideration of the affection he had ſo long cheriſhed for her, a full explanation of the circumſtances connected with the diſcovery of her family.

At this public avowal of his attachment, a haughty impatience appeared on the countenance of the Marcheſe, who forbade him to make further inquiry on the ſubject, and was immediately retiring from the chamber.

" My preſence is no longer neceſſary," he added: " the priſoner has concluded the only detail which I could be intereſted to hear from him; and, in conſideration of the confeſſion he has made as to the innocence of my ſon, I pardon him the ſuffering, which his falſe charge has occaſioned to me and my family. The paper containing his depoſitions is given to your reſponſibility, holy father," addreſſing

the inquiſitor; "and you are required to lay it upon the table of the Holy Office, that the innocence of Vincentio di Vivaldi may appear, and that he may be releaſed from theſe priſons without further delay. But, firſt, I demand a copy of thoſe declarations, and that the copy alſo ſhall be ſigned by the preſent witneſſes."

The ſecretary was now bidden to copy them, and, while the Marcheſe waited to receive the paper (for he would not leave the chamber till he had ſecured it), Vivaldi was urging his claim for an explanation reſpecting the family of Ellena, with unconquerable perſeverance. Schedoni, no longer permitted to evade the inquiry, could not, however, give a circumſtantial explanation, without partly diſcloſing alſo the fatal deſigns which had been meditated by him and the late Marcheſa di Vivaldi, of whoſe death he was ignorant; he related, therefore, little more reſpecting Ellena than that a

portrait, which ſhe wore as being her father's, had firſt led to the diſcovery of her family.

While the confeſſor had been giving this brief explanation, Nicola, who was ſomewhat withdrawn from the circle, ſtood gazing at him with the malignity of a demon. His glowing eyes juſt appeared beneath the edge of his cowl, while, rolled up in his dark drapery, the lower features of his face were muffled; but the intermediate part of his countenance, receiving the full glare of the torch, diſplayed all its ſpeaking and terrific lines. Vivaldi, as his eye glanced upon him, ſaw again the very monk of Paluzzi, and he thought he beheld alſo a man capable of the very crimes of which he had accuſed Schedoni. At this inſtant, he remembered the dreadful garment that had been diſcovered in a dungeon of the fortreſs; and, yet more, he remembered the extraordinary circumſtances attending the death of Bianchi, together

together with the immediate knowledge which the monk had diſplayed of that event. Vivaldi's ſuſpicions reſpecting the cauſe of her death being thus revived, he determined to obtain, if poſſible, either a relief from, or a confirmation of them; and he ſolemnly called upon Schedoni, who, already condemned to die, had no longer any thing to fear from a diſcloſure of the truth, whatever it might be, to declare all that he knew on the ſubject. As he did ſo, he looked at Nicola, to obſerve the effect of this demand, whoſe countenance was now, however, ſo much ſhrouded, that little of its expreſſion could be ſeen; and Vivaldi remarked, that, while he had ſpoken, the monk drew his garment cloſer over the lower part of his face, and that he had immediately turned his eyes from him upon the Confeſſor.

With moſt ſolemn proteſtations, Schedoni declared himſelf to be both innocent and ignorant of the cauſe of Bianchi's death.

Vivaldi then demanded by what means his agent, Nicola, had obtained ſuch immediate information, as the warning he had delivered at Paluzzi proved him to have, of an event, in which it appeared that he could be little intereſted; and why that warning had been given.

Nicola did not attempt to anticipate the reply of Schedoni, who, after a momentary ſilence, ſaid, "That warning, young man, was given to deter you from viſiting Altieri, as was every circumſtance of advice or intelligence, which you received beneath the arch of Paluzzi."

"Father," replied Vivaldi, "you have never loved, or you would have ſpared yourſelf the practice of artifices ſo ineffectual to miſlead or to conquer a lover. Did you believe that an anonymous adviſer could have more influence with me than my affection, or that I could be terrified by ſuch ſtratagems into the renunciation of its object?"

"I be-

"I believed," rejoined the Confeſſor, "that the diſintereſted advice of a ſtranger might have ſome weight with you; but I truſted more to the impreſſion of awe, which the conduct and ſeeming foreknowledge of that ſtranger were adapted to inſpire in a mind like your's; and I thus endeavoured to avail myſelf of your prevailing weakneſs."

"And what do you term my prevailing weakneſs," ſaid Vivaldi, bluſhing.

"A ſuſceptibility which renders you eſpecially liable to ſuperſtition," replied Schedoni.

"What! does a monk call ſuperſtition a weakneſs!" rejoined Vivaldi. "But grant he does, on what occaſion have I betrayed ſuch weakneſs?"

"Have you forgotten a converſation which I once held with you on inviſible ſpirits?" ſaid Schedoni.

As he aſked this, Vivaldi was ſtruck with the tone of his voice; he thought it

was different from what he had remembered ever to have heard from him; and he looked at Schedoni more intently, that he might be certain it was he who had ſpoken. The Confeſſor's eyes were fixed upon him, and he repeated ſlowly in the ſame tone, "Have you forgotten?"

"I have not forgotten the converſation to which you allude," replied Vivaldi, "and I do not recollect that I then diſcloſed any opinion that may juſtify your aſſertion."

"The opinions you avowed were rational," ſaid Schedoni, "but the ardour of your imagination was apparent; and what ardent imagination ever was contented to truſt to plain reaſoning, or to the evidence of the ſenſes? It may not willingly confine itſelf to the dull truths of this earth, but, eager to expand its faculties, to fill its capacity, and to experience its own peculiar delights, ſoars after new wonders into a world of its own!"

Vivaldi

Vivaldi bluſhed at this reproof, now conſcious of its juſtneſs; and was ſurpriſed that Schedoni ſhould ſo well have underſtood the nature of his mind, while he himſelf, with whom conjecture had never aſſumed the ſtability of opinion, on the ſubject to which the Confeſſor alluded, had been ignorant even of its propenſities.

"I acknowledge the truth of your remark," ſaid Vivaldi, "as far as it concerns myſelf. I have, however, inquiries to make on a point leſs abſtracted, and towards explaining which the evidence of my ſenſes themſelves have done little. To whom belonged the bloody garments I found in the dungeon of Paluzzi, and what became of the perſon to whom they had pertained?"

Conſternation appeared for an inſtant on the features of Schedoni. "What garments?" ſaid he.

"They appeared to be thoſe of a perſon who had died by violence," replied

Vivaldi, " and they were diſcovered in a place frequented by your avowed agent, Nicola, the monk."

As he concluded the ſentence, Vivaldi looked at Nicola, upon whom the attention of every perſon preſent was now directed.

" They were my own," ſaid this monk.

" Your own! and in that condition!" exclaimed Vivaldi. " They were covered with gore!"

" They were my own," repeated Nicola. " For their condition, I have to thank you,—the wound your piſtol gave me occaſioned it."

Vivaldi was aſtoniſhed by this apparent ſubterfuge. " I had no piſtol," he rejoined, " my ſword was my only weapon!

" Pauſe a moment," ſaid the monk.

" I repeat that I had no fire-arms," replied Vivaldi.

" I ap-

" I appeal to father Schedoni," rejoined Nicola, " whether I was not wounded by a piſtol ſhot."

" To me you have no longer any right of appeal," ſaid Schedoni. " Why ſhould I ſave you from ſuſpicions, that may bring you to a ſtate like this, to which you have reduced me!"

" Your crimes have reduced you to it," replied Nicola, " I have only done my duty, and that which another perſon could have effected without my aid—the prieſt to whom Spalatro made his laſt confeſſion."

" It is, however, a duty of ſuch a kind," obſerved Vivaldi, " as I would not willingly have upon my conſcience. You have betrayed the life of your former friend, and have compelled me to aſſiſt in the deſtruction of a fellow being."

" You, like me, have aſſiſted to deſtroy a deſtroyer," replied the monk. " He has taken life, and deſerves, therefore,

fore, to loſe it. If, however, it will afford you conſolation to know that you have not materially aſſiſted in his deſtruction, I will hereafter give you proof for this aſſurance. There were other means of ſhewing that Schedoni was the Count di Bruno, than the teſtimony of Anſaldo, though I was ignorant of them when I bade you ſummon the penitentiary."

"If you had ſooner avowed this," ſaid Vivaldi, "the aſſertion would have been more plauſible. Now, I can only underſtand that it is deſigned to win my ſilence, and prevent my retorting upon you your own maxim—that he who has taken the life of another, deſerves to loſe his own.—To whom did thoſe garments belong?"

"To myſelf, I repeat," replied Nicola, "Schedoni can bear teſtimony that I received at Paluzzi a piſtol wound."

"Impoſſible," ſaid Vivaldi, "I was armed only with my ſword!"

"You

" You had a companion," obſerved the monk, " had not he fire-arms?"

Vivaldi, after a momentary conſideration, recollected that Paulo had piſtols, and that he had fired one beneath the arch of Paluzzi, on the firſt alarm occaſioned by the ſtranger's voice. He immediately acknowledged the recollection. " But I heard no groan, no ſymptom of diſtreſs!" he added. " Beſides, the garments were at a conſiderable diſtance from the ſpot where the piſtol was fired! How could a perſon, ſo ſeverely wounded as thoſe garments indicated, have ſilently withdrawn to a remote dungeon, or, having done ſo, is it probable he would have thrown aſide his dreſs!"

" All that is nevertheleſs true," replied Nicola. " My reſolution enabled me to ſtifle the expreſſion of my anguiſh; I withdrew to the interior of the ruin, to eſcape from you, but you purſued me even to the dungeon, where I threw off my diſ-

coloured

coloured veſtments, in which I dared not return to my convent, and departed by a way which all your ingenuity failed to diſcover. The people who were already in the fort, for the purpoſe of aſſiſting to confine you and your ſervant during the night on which Signora Roſalba was taken from Altieri, procured me another habit, and relief for my wound. But, though I was unſeen by you during the night, I was not entirely unheard, for my groans reached you more than once from an adjoining chamber, and my companions were entertained with the alarm which your ſervant teſtified.—Are you now convinced?"

The groans were clearly remembered by Vivaldi, and many other circumſtances of Nicola's narration accorded ſo well with others, which he recollected to have occurred on the night alluded to, that he had no longer a doubt of its veracity. The ſuddenneſs of Bianchi's death, however,

ever, ſtill occaſioned him ſuſpicions as to its cauſe; yet Schedoni had declared not only that he was innocent, but ignorant of this cauſe, which it appeared from his unwillingneſs to give teſtimony in favour of his agent, he would not have affirmed, had he been conſcious that the monk was in any degree guilty in this inſtance. That Nicola could have no inducement for attempting the life of Bianchi other than a reward offered him by Schedoni, was clear; and Vivaldi, after more fully conſidering theſe circumſtances, became convinced that her death was in conſequence of ſome incident of natural decay.

While this converſation was paſſing, the Marcheſe, impatient to put a concluſion to it, and to leave the chamber, repeatedly urged the ſecretary to diſpatch; and, while he now earneſtly renewed his requeſt, another voice anſwered for the ſecretary, that he had nearly concluded. Vivaldi thought that he had heard the

voice

voice on ſome former occaſion, and on turning his eyes upon the perſon who had ſpoken, diſcovered the ſtranger to be the ſame who had firſt viſited him in priſon. Perceiving by his dreſs, that he was an officer of the Inquiſition, Vivaldi now underſtood too well the purport of his former viſit, and that he had come with a deſign to betray him by affected ſympathy into a confeſſion of ſome heretical opinions. Similar inſtances of treachery Vivaldi had heard were frequently practiſed upon accuſed perſons, but he had never fully believed ſuch cruelty poſſible till now, that it had been attempted towards himſelf.

The viſit of this perſon bringing to his recollection the ſubſequent one he had received from Nicola, Vivaldi inquired whether the centinels had really admitted him to his cell, or he had entered it by other means; a queſtion to which the monk was ſilent, but the ſmile on his features, if ſo ſtrange an expreſſion deſerved

to

to be called a ſmile, ſeemed to reply, " Do you believe that I, a ſervant of the Inquiſition, will betray its ſecrets?"

Vivaldi, however, urged the inquiry, for he wiſhed to know whether the guard, who appeared to be faithful to their office, had eſcaped the puniſhment that was threatened.

" They were honeſt," replied Nicola, " ſeek no further."

" Are the tribunal convinced of their integrity?"

Nicola ſmiled again in deriſion, and replied, " They never doubted it."

" How!" ſaid Vivaldi. " Why were theſe men put under arreſt, if their faithfulneſs was not even ſuſpected?"

" Be ſatisfied with the knowledge, which experience has given you of the ſecrets of the Inquiſition," replied Nicola ſolemnly, " ſeek to know no more!"

" It has terrible ſecrets!" ſaid Schedoni, who had been long ſilent. " Know, young

young man, that almoſt every cell of every priſoner has a concealed entrance, by which the miniſters of death may paſs unnoticed to their victims. This Nicola is now one of thoſe dreadful ſummoners, and is acquainted with all the ſecret avenues that lead to murder."

Vivaldi ſhrunk from Nicola in horror, and Schedoni pauſed; but while he had ſpoken, Vivaldi had again noticed the extraordinary change in his voice, and ſhuddered at its ſound no leſs than at the information it had given. Nicola was ſilent; but his terrible eyes were fixed in vengeance on Schedoni.

"His office has been ſhort," reſumed the Confeſſor, turning his heavy eyes upon Nicola, "and his taſk is almoſt done!" As he pronounced the laſt words his voice faltered, but they were heard by the monk, who drawing nearer to the bed, demanded an explanation of them. A ghaſtly ſmile triumphed in the features of Schedoni;

Schedoni; "Fear not but that an explanation will come full ſoon," ſaid he.

Nicola fixed himſelf before the Confeſſor, and bent his brows upon him as if he would have ſearched into his very ſoul. When Vivaldi again looked at Schedoni, he was ſhocked on obſerving the ſudden alteration of his countenance, yet ſtill a faint ſmile of triumph lingered there. But, while Vivaldi gazed, the features ſuddenly became agitated; in the next inſtant his whole frame was convulſed, and heavy groans laboured from his breaſt. Schedoni was now evidently dying.

The horror of Vivaldi, and of the Marcheſe, who endeavoured to leave the chamber, was equalled only by the general confuſion that reigned there; every perſon preſent ſeemed to feel at leaſt a momentary compaſſion, except Nicola, who ſtood unmoved beſide Schedoni, and looked ſtedfaſtly upon his pangs, while a ſmile of deriſion marked his countenance. As Vivaldi obſerved, with deteſtation, this

this expreſſion, a ſlight ſpaſm darted over Nicola's face, and his muſcles alſo ſeemed to labour with ſudden contraction; but the affection was tranſient, and vaniſhed as abruptly as it had appeared. The monk, however, turned from the miſerable ſpectacle before him, and as he turned he caught involuntarily at the arm of a perſon near him and leaned on his ſhoulder for ſupport. His manner appeared to betray that he had not been permitted to triumph in the ſufferings of his enemy, without participating at leaſt in their horror.

Schedoni's ſtruggles now began to abate, and in a ſhort time he lay motionleſs. When he uncloſed his eyes, death was in them. He was ſtill nearly inſenſible; but preſently a faint gleam of recollection ſhot from them, and gradually lighting them up, the character of his ſoul appeared there; the expreſſion was indeed feeble, but it was true. He moved his lips as if he would have ſpoken, and looked languidly round the chamber, ſeemingly

ſeemingly in ſearch of ſome perſon. At length, he uttered a ſound, but he had not yet ſufficient command of his muſcles, to modulate that ſound into a word, till by repeated efforts the name of Nicola became intelligible. At the call, the monk, raiſed his head from the ſhoulder of the perſon on whom he had reclined, and turning round, Schedoni, as was evident from the ſudden change of expreſſion in his countenance, diſcovered him; his eyes, as they ſettled on Nicola ſeemed to recollect all their wonted fire, and the malignant triumph, lately ſo prevalent in his phyſiognomy, again appeared as in the next moment he pointed to him. His glance ſeemed ſuddenly impowered with the deſtructive faſcination attributed to that of the baſiliſk, for while it now met Nicola's, that monk ſeemed as if transfixed to the ſpot, and unable to withdraw his eyes from the glare of Schedoni's; in their expreſſion he read the dreadful ſentence of his fate, the triumph of revenge

and

and cunning. Struck with this terrible conviction a pallid hue overſpread his face; at the ſame time an involuntary motion convulſed his features, cold trembling ſeized upon his frame, and, uttering a deep groan, he fell back, and was caught in the arms of the people near him. At the inſtant of his fall, Schedoni uttered a ſound ſo ſtrange and horrible, ſo convulſed, and ſo loud, ſo exulting, yet ſo unlike any human voice, that every perſon in the chamber, except thoſe who were aſſiſting Nicola, ſtruck with irreſiſtible terror, endeavoured to make their way out of it. This, however, was impracticable, for the door was faſtened, until a phyſician, who had been ſent for, ſhould arrive, and ſome inveſtigation could be made into this myſterious affair. The conſternation of the Marcheſe and of Vivaldi, compelled to witneſs this ſcene of horror, cannot eaſily be imagined.

Schedoni, having uttered that demoniacal ſound of exultation, was not permitted

mitted to repeat it, for the pangs he had lately ſuffered returned upon him, and he was again in ſtrong convulſions, when the phyſician entered the chamber. The moment he beheld Schedoni, he declared him to be poiſoned; and he pronounced a ſimilar opinion on father Nicola; affirming alſo, that the drug, as appeared from the violence of the effect, was of too ſubtle and inveterate a nature to allow of antidote. He was, however, willing to adminiſter the medicine uſual in ſuch caſes.

While he was giving orders to an attendant, with reſpect to this, the violence of Schedoni's convulſions once more relaxed; but Nicola appeared in the laſt extremity. His ſufferings were inceſſant, his ſenſes never for a moment returned, and he expired, before the medicine, which had been ſent for, could be brought. When it came, however, it was adminiſtered with ſome ſucceſs to Schedoni, who

recovered not only his recollection, but his voice; and the firſt word he uttered was, as formerly, the name of Nicola.

"Does he live?" added the Confeſſor with the utmoſt difficulty, and after a long pauſe. The perſons around him were ſilent, but the truth, which this ſilence indicated, ſeemed to revive him.

The inquiſitor, who had attended, perceiving that Schedoni had recovered the uſe of his intellects, now judged it prudent to aſk ſome queſtions relative to his preſent condition, and to the cauſe of Nicola's death.

"Poiſon," replied Schedoni readily.

"By whom adminiſtered?" ſaid the inquiſitor, "conſider that, while you anſwer, you are on your death-bed."

"I have no wiſh to conceal the truth," rejoined Schedoni, "nor the ſatisfaction," —he was obliged to pauſe, but preſently added, "I have deſtroyed him, who wou'd have deſtroyed me, and—and I have eſcaped an ignominious death."

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He paused again; it was with difficulty that he had said thus much, and he was now overcome by the exertions he had made. The secretary, who had not been permitted to leave the chamber, was ordered to note Schedoni's words.

"You avow then," continued the inquisitor, "that the poison was administered, both in the case of father Nicola and in your own, by yourself?"

Schedoni could not immediately reply; but when he did, he said, "I avow it."

He was asked by what means he had contrived to procure the poison, and was bidden to name his accomplice.

"I had no accomplice," replied Schedoni.

"How did you procure the poison, then?"

Schedoni, slowly and with difficulty, replied, "It was concealed in my vest."

"Consider that you are dying," said the inquisitor, "and confess the truth.

We cannot believe what you have laſt aſſerted. It is improbable that you ſhould have had an opportunity of providing yourſelf with poiſon after your arreſt, and equally improbable that you ſhould have thought ſuch proviſion neceſſary before that period. Confeſs who is your accomplice."

This accuſation of falſehood recalled the ſpirit of Schedoni, which, contending with, and conquering, for a moment, corporeal ſuffering, he ſaid in a firmer tone, "It was the poiſon, in which I dip my poniard, the better to defend me."

The inquiſitor ſmiled in contempt of this explanation, and Schedoni, obſerving him, deſired a particular part of his veſt might be examined, where would be found ſome remains of the drug concealed, as he had affirmed. He was indulged in his requeſt, and the poiſon was diſcovered within a broad hem of his garment.

Still it was inconceivable how he had con-

contrived to adminiſter it to Nicola, who, though he had been for ſome time alone with him on this day, would ſcarcely have ſo far confided in an enemy as to have accepted any ſeeming ſuſtenance that might have been offered by him. The inquiſitor, ſtill anxious to diſcover an accomplice, aſked Schedoni who had aſſiſted to adminiſter the drug to Nicola; but the Confeſſor was no longer in a condition to reply. Life was now ſinking apace; the gleam of ſpirit and of character that had returned to his eyes, was departed, and left them haggard and fixed; and preſently a livid corſe was all that remained of the once terrible Schedoni!

While this awful event had been accompliſhing, the Marcheſe, ſuffering under the utmoſt perturbation, had withdrawn to the diſtant grate of the dungeon, where he converſed with an official as to what might be the probable conſequence

of his preſent ſituation to himſelf; but Vivaldi, in an agony of horror, had been calling inceſſantly for the medicine, which might poſſibly afford ſome relief to the anguiſh he witneſſed; and when it was brought, he had aſſiſted to ſupport the ſufferers.

At length, now that the worſt was over, and when the ſeveral witneſſes had ſigned to the laſt avowal of Schedoni, every perſon in the chamber was ſuffered to depart; and Vivaldi was re-conducted to his priſon, accompanied by the Marcheſe, where he was to remain till the deciſion of the holy office reſpecting his innocence, as aſſerted by the depoſition of Schedoni, ſhould be known. He was too much affected by the late ſcene to give the Marcheſe any explanation at preſent, reſpecting the family of Ellena di Roſalba; and the Marcheſe, having remained for ſome time with his ſon, withdrew to the reſidence of his friend.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

"Maſter, go on, and I will follow thee
To the laſt gaſp, with truth and loyalty."

SHAKESPEARE.

In conſequence of the dying confeſſion of Schedoni, an order was ſent from the holy office for the releaſe of Vivaldi, within a few days after the death of the Confeſſor; and the Marcheſe conducted his ſon from the priſons of the Inquiſition to the manſion of his friend, the Count di Maro, with whom he had reſided ſince his arrival at Rome.

While they were receiving the ceremonious congratulations of the Count, and of ſome nobles aſſembled to welcome the emancipated priſoner, a loud voice was heard from the ante-chamber, exclaiming, "Let me paſs! It is my maſter, let me

paſs ! May all thoſe who attempt to ſtop me, be ſent to the Inquiſition themſelves !"

In the next inſtant Paulo burſt into the ſaloon, followed by a group of lacqueys, who, however, pauſed at the door, fearful of the diſpleaſure of their lord, yet ſcarcely able to ſtifle a laugh; while Paulo, ſpringing forward, had nearly overſet ſome of the company, who happened at that moment to be bowing with profound joy to Vivaldi.

" It is my maſter ! it is my dear maſter !" cried Paulo, and, ſending off a nobleman with each elbow, as he made his way between them, he hugged Vivaldi in his arms, repeating, " O, my maſter ! my maſter !" till a paſſion of joy and affection overcame his voice, and he fell at his maſter's feet and wept.

This was a moment of finer ſatisfaction to Vivaldi, than he had known ſince his meeting with his father ; and he was too much intereſted by his faithful ſervant, to have

have leiſure to apologize to the aſtoniſhed company for his rudeneſs. While the lacqueys were repairing the miſchief Paulo had occaſioned, were picking up the rolling ſnuff-boxes he had jerked away in his paſſage, and wiping the ſnuff from the ſoiled clothes, Vivaldi was participating in all the delight, and returning all the affection of his ſervant, and was ſo wholly occupied by theſe pleaſurable feelings as ſcarcely to be ſenſible that any perſons beſides themſelves were in the room. The Marcheſe, meanwhile, was making a thouſand apologies for the diſaſters Paulo had occaſioned; was alternately calling upon him to recollect in whoſe preſence he was, and to quit the apartment immediately; explaining to the company that he had not ſeen Vivaldi ſince they were together in the Inquiſition, and remarking profoundly, that he was much attached to his maſter. But Paulo, inſenſible to the

repeated commands of the Marcheſe, and to the endeavours of Vivaldi to raiſe him, was ſtill pouring forth his whole heart at his maſter's feet. "Ah! my Signor," ſaid he, "if you could but know how miſerable I was when I got out of the Inquiſition!"——

"He raves!" obſerved the Count to the Marcheſe, "you perceive that joy has rendered him delirious!"

"How I wandered about the walls half the night, and what it coſt me to leave them! But when I loſt ſight of them, Signor, O! San Dominico! I thought my heart would have broke. I had a great mind to have gone back again and given myſelf up; and, perhaps, I ſhould too, if it had not been for my friend, the centinel, who eſcaped with me, and I would not do him an injury, poor fellow! for he meant nothing but kindneſs when he let me out. And, ſure enough,

enough, as it has proved, it was all for the beſt; for now I am here too, Signor, as well as you; and can tell you all I felt when I believed I ſhould never ſee you again."

The contraſt of his preſent joy to his remembered grief again brought tears into Paulo's eyes; he ſmiled and wept, and ſobbed and laughed with ſuch rapid tranſition, that Vivaldi began to be alarmed for him; when, ſuddenly becoming calm, he looked up in his maſter's face and ſaid gravely, but with eagerneſs, "Pray Signor, was not the roof of your little priſon peaked, and was there not a little turret ſtuck up at one corner of it? and was there not a battlement round the turret? and was there not"——Vivaldi, after regarding him for a moment, replied ſmilingly, "Why truly, my good Paulo, my dungeon was ſo far from the roof, that I never had an opportunity of obſerving it."

"That is very true, Signor," replied Paulo, "very true indeed; but I did not happen to think of that. I am certain, though, it was as I ſay, and I was ſure of it at the time. O Signor! I thought that roof would have broke my heart; O how I did look at it! and now to think that I am here, with my dear maſter once again!"

As Paulo concluded, his tears and ſobs returned with more violence than before; and Vivaldi, who could not perceive any neceſſary connection between this mention of the roof of his late priſon and the joy his ſervant expreſſed on ſeeing him again, began to fear that his ſenſes were bewildered, and deſired an explanation of his words. Paulo's account, rude and ſimple as it was, ſoon diſcovered to him the relation of theſe apparently heterogeneous circumſtances to each other; when Vivaldi, overcome by this new inſtance of the power of Paulo's affection, embraced him with

with his whole heart, and, compelling him to riſe, preſented him to the aſſembly as his faithful friend and chief deliverer.

The Marcheſe, affected by the ſcene he had witneſſed, and with the truth of Vivaldi's words, condeſcended to give Paulo a hearty ſhake by the hand, and to thank him warmly for the bravery and fidelity he had diſplayed in his maſter's intereſt. "I never can fully reward your attachment," added the Marcheſe, "but what remains for me to do, ſhall be done. From this moment I make you independent, and promiſe, in the preſence of this noble company, to give you a thouſand ſequins, as ſome acknowledgement of your ſervices."

Paulo did not expreſs all the gratitude for this gift which the Marcheſe expected. He ſtammered, and bowed, and bluſhed, and at length burſt into tears; and when Vivaldi inquired what diſtreſſed him, he replied, "Why, Signor, of what uſe are the

the thouſand ſequins to me, if I am to be independent! what uſe, if I am not to ſtay with you?"

Vivaldi cordially aſſured Paulo, that he ſhould always remain with him, and that he ſhould conſider it as his duty to render his future life happy. "You ſhall henceforth," added Vivaldi, "be placed at the head of my houſehold; the management of my ſervants, and the whole conduct of my domeſtic concerns, ſhall be committed to you, as a proof of my entire confidence in your integrity and attachment; and becauſe this is a ſituation which will allow you to be always near me."

"Thank you, my Signor," replied Paulo, in a voice rendered almoſt inarticulate by his gratitude, "Thank you with my whole heart! if I ſtay with you, that is enough for me, I aſk no more. But I hope my Lord Marcheſe will not think me ungrateful for refuſing to accept of the thou-

thouſand ſequins he was ſo kind as to offer me, if I would but be independent, for I thank him as much as if I had received them, and a great deal more too."

The Marcheſe, ſmiling at Paulo's miſtake, rejoined, "As I do not perceive, my good friend, how your remaining with your maſter can be a circumſtance to diſqualify you from accepting a thouſand ſequins, I command you, on pain of my diſpleaſure, to receive them; and whenever you marry, I ſhall expect that you will ſhew your obedience to me again, by accepting another thouſand from me with your wife, as her dower."

"This is too much, Signor," ſaid Paulo ſobbing—"too much to be borne!" and ran out of the ſaloon. But amidſt the murmur of applauſe which his conduct drew from the noble ſpectators, for Paulo's warm heart had ſubdued even the coldneſs of their pride, a convulſive ſound from the ante-chamber betrayed the exceſs

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of emotion, which he had thus abruptly withdrawn himſelf to conceal.

In a few hours, the Marcheſe and Vivaldi took leave of their friends, and ſet out for Naples, where they arrived, with out any interruption, on the fourth day. But it was a melancholy journey to Vivaldi, notwithſtanding the joy of his late eſcape; for the Marcheſe, having introduced the mention of his attachment to Ellena di Roſalba, informed him, that, under the preſent unforeſeen circumſtances, he could not conſider his late engagement to the Marcheſa on that ſubject as binding, and that Vivaldi muſt relinquiſh Ellena, if it ſhould appear that ſhe really was the daughter of the late Schedoni.

Immediately on his arrival at Naples, however, Vivaldi, with a degree of impatience, to which his utmoſt ſpeed was inadequate, and with a revived joy ſo powerful as to overcome every fear, and every

every melancholy conſideration, which the late converſation with his father had occaſioned, haſtened to the *Santa della Piéta.*

Ellena heard his voice from the grate, inquiring for her of a nun, who was in the parlour, and in the next inſtant they beheld each other yet once again.

In ſuch a meeting, after the long uncertainty and terror, which each had ſuffered for the fate of the other, and the dangers and hardſhips they had really incurred, joy was exalted almoſt to agony. Ellena wept, and ſome minutes paſſed before ſhe could anſwer to Vivaldi's few words of tender exclamation: it was long ere ſhe was tranquil enough to obſerve the alteration which ſevere confinement had given to his appearance. The animated expreſſion of his countenance was unchanged; yet, when the firſt glow of joy had faded from it, and Ellena had lei-

leiſure to obſerve its wanneſs, ſhe underſtood, too certainly, that he had been a priſoner in the Inquiſition.

During this interview, he related, at Ellena's requeſt, the particulars of his adventures, ſince he had been ſeparated from her in the chapel of San Sebaſtian; but, when he came to that part of the narration where it was neceſſary to mention Schedoni, he pauſed in unconquerable embarraſſment and a diſtreſs not unmingled with horror. Vivaldi could ſcarcely endure even to hint to Ellena any part of the unjuſt conduct, which the Confeſſor had practiſed towards him, yet it was impoſſible to conclude his account, without expreſſing much more than hints; nor could he bear to afflict her with a knowledge of the death of him who he believed to be her parent, however the dreadful circumſtances of that event might be concealed. His embarraſſment became obvious, and was ſtill increaſed by Ellena's inquiries.

At length, as an introduction to the information it was neceſſary to give, and to the fuller explanation he wiſhed to receive upon a ſubject, which, though it was the one that preſſed moſt anxiouſly upon his mind, he had not yet dared to mention, Vivaldi ventured to declare his knowledge of her having diſcovered her parent to be living. The ſatisfaction immediately apparent upon Ellena's countenance heightened his diſtreſs, and his reluctance to proceed; believing, as he did, that the event he had to communicate muſt change her gladneſs to grief.

Ellena, however, upon this mention of a topic ſo intereſting to them both, proceeded to expreſs the happineſs ſhe had received from the diſcovery of a parent, whoſe virtues had even won her affection long before ſhe underſtood her own intereſt in them. It was with ſome difficulty, that Vivaldi could conceal his ſurprize at ſuch an avowal of prepoſſeſſion; the manners of

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Schedoni, of whom he believed her to ſpeak, having certainly never been adapted to inſpire tenderneſs. But his ſurprize ſoon changed its object, when Olivia, who had heard that a ſtranger was at the grate, entered the parlour, and was announced as the mother of Ellena di Roſalba.

Before Vivaldi left the convent, a full explanation, as to family, was given on both ſides, when he had the infinite joy of learning, that Ellena was not the daughter of Schedoni; and Olivia had the ſatisfaction to know that ſhe had no future evil to apprehend from him who had hitherto been her worſt enemy. The manner of his death, however, with all the circumſtances of his character, as unfolded by the late trial, Vivaldi was careful to conceal.

When Ellena had withdrawn from the room, Vivaldi made a full acknowledgment to Olivia of his long attachment to her

her daughter, and ſupplicated for her conſent to their marriage. To this application, however, Olivia replied, that, though ſhe had been no ſtranger to their mutual affection, or to the ſeveral circumſtances which had both proved its durability, and tried their fortitude, ſhe never could conſent that her daughter ſhould become a member of any family, whoſe principal was either inſenſible of her value, or unwilling to acknowledge it; and that in this inſtance it would be neceſſary to Vivaldi's ſucceſs, not only that he, but that his father ſhould be a ſuitor; on which condition only, ſhe allowed him to hope for her acquieſcence.

Such a ſtipulation ſcarcely chilled the hopes of Vivaldi, now that Ellena was proved to be the daughter not of the murderer Schedoni, but of a Count di Bruno, who had been no leſs reſpectable in character than in rank; and he had little

little doubt that his father would conſent to fulfil the promiſe he had given to the dying Marcheſa.

In this belief he was not miſtaken. The Marcheſe, having attended to Vivaldi's account of Ellena's family, promiſed, that if it ſhould appear there was no ſecond miſtake on the ſubject, he would not longer oppoſe the wiſhes of his ſon.

The Marcheſe immediately cauſed a private inquiry to be made as to the identity of Olivia, the preſent Counteſs di Bruno; and, though this was not purſued without difficulty, the phyſician, who had aſſiſted in the plan of her eſcape from the cruelty of Ferando di Bruno, and who was living, as well as Beatrice, who clearly remembered the ſiſter of her late miſtreſs, at length rendered Olivia's identity unqueſtionable. Now, therefore, that the Marcheſe's every doubt was removed, he paid a viſit to *La Piéta*, and

and ſolicited, in due form, Olivia's conſent to the nuptials of Vivaldi with Ellena; which ſhe granted him with an entire ſatisfaction. In this interview, the Marcheſe was ſo much faſcinated by the manners of the Counteſs, and pleaſed with the delicacy and ſweetneſs, which appeared in thoſe of Ellena, that his conſent was no longer a conſtrained one, and he willingly relinquiſhed the views of ſuperior rank and fortune, which he had formerly looked to for his ſon, for thoſe of virtue and permanent happineſs that were now unfolded to him.

On the twentieth of May, the day on which Ellena completed her eighteenth year, her nuptials with Vivaldi were ſolemnized in the church of the *Santa Maria della Piéta*, in the preſence of the Marcheſe and of the Counteſs di Bruno. As Ellena advanced through the church, ſhe recollected, when on a former occaſion

ſion ſhe had met Vivaldi at the altar, and, the ſcenes of San Sebaſtian riſing to her memory, the happy character of thoſe, which her preſent ſituation oppoſed to them, drew tears of tender joy and gratitude to her eyes. Then, irreſolute, deſolate, ſurrounded by ſtrangers, and enſnared by enemies, ſhe had believed ſhe ſaw Vivaldi for the laſt time; now, ſupported by the preſence of a beloved parent, and by the willing approbation of the perſon, who had hitherto ſo ſtrenuouſly oppoſed her, they were met to part no more; and, as a recollection of the moment when ſhe had been carried from the chapel glanced upon her mind, that moment when ſhe had called upon him for ſuccour, ſupplicated even to hear his voice once more, and when a blank ſilence, which, as ſhe believed, was that of death, had ſucceeded; as the anguiſh of that moment was now remembered,

Ellena became more than ever ſenſible of the happineſs of the preſent.

Olivia, in thus relinquiſhing her daughter ſo ſoon after ſhe had found her, ſuffered ſome pain; but ſhe was conſoled by the fair proſpect of happineſs that opened to Ellena, and cheered, by conſidering, that, though ſhe relinquiſhed, ſhe ſhould not loſe her, ſince the vicinity of Vivaldi's reſidence to *La Piéta* would permit a frequent intercourſe with the convent.

As a teſtimony of ſingular eſteem, Paulo was permitted to be preſent at the marriage of his maſter; when, as perched in a high gallery of the church, he looked down upon the ceremony, and witneſſed the delight in Vivaldi's countenance, the ſatisfaction in that of my "old Lord Marcheſe," the penſive happineſs in the Counteſs di Bruno's, and the tender complacency of Ellena's, which her veil,

partly undrawn, allowed him to obſerve, he could ſcarcely refrain from expreſſing the joy he felt, and ſhouting aloud, "*O! giorno felice! O! giorno felice!*"*

* O happy day! O happy day!

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

"Ah! where ſhall I ſo ſweet a dwelling find!
For all around, without, and all within,
Nothing ſave what delightful was and kind,
Of goodneſs favouring and a tender mind,
E'er roſe to view."

THOMSON.

THE fête which, ſome time after the nuptials, was given by the Marcheſe in celebration of them, was held at a delightful villa, belonging to Vivaldi, a few miles diſtant from Naples, upon the border of the gulf, and on the oppoſite ſhore to that which had been the frequent abode of the Marcheſa. The beauty of its ſituation and its interior elegance induced Vivaldi and Ellena to ſelect it as their chief reſidence. It was, in truth, a ſcene of fairy-land. The pleaſure-grounds ex-

tended over a valley, which opened to the bay, and the houſe ſtood at the entrance of this valley, upon a gentle ſlope that margined the water, and commanded the whole extent of its luxuriant ſhores, from the lofty cape of Miſeno to the bold mountains of the ſouth, which, ſtretching acroſs the diſtance, appeared to riſe out of the ſea, and divided the gulf of Naples from that of Salerno.

The marble porticoes and arcades of the villa were ſhadowed by groves of the beautiful magnolia, flowering aſh, cedrati, camellias, and majeſtic palms; and the cool and airy halls, opening on two oppoſite ſides to a colonnade, admitted beyond the rich foilage all the ſeas and ſhores of Naples, from the weſt; and to the eaſt, views of the valley of the domain, withdrawing among winding hills wooded to their ſummits, except where cliffs of various-coloured granites, yellow, green,

and

and purple, lifted their tall heads, and threw gay gleams of light amidſt the umbrageous landſcape.

The ſtyle of the gardens, where lawns and groves, and woods, varied the undulating ſurface, was that of England, and of the preſent day, rather than of Italy; except "where a long alley peeping on the main," exhibited ſuch gigantic loftineſs of ſhade, and grandeur of perſpective, as characterize the Italian taſte.

On this jubilee, every avenue, and grove, and pavilion, was richly illuminated. The villa itſelf, where each airy hall and arcade was reſplendent with lights, and laviſhly decorated with flowers and the moſt beautiful ſhrubs, whoſe buds ſeemed to pour all Arabia's perfumes on the air,—this villa reſembled a fabric called up by enchantment, rather than a ſtructure of human art.

The dreſſes of the higher rank of viſitors were as ſplendid as the ſcenery, of which Ellena was, in every reſpect, the queen. But this entertainment was not given to perſons of diſtinction only; for both Vivaldi and Ellena had wiſhed that all the tenants of the domain ſhould partake of it, and ſhare the abundant happineſs which themſelves poſſeſſed; ſo that the grounds, which were extenſive enough to accommodate each rank, were relinquiſhed to a general gaiety. Paulo was, on this occaſion, a ſort of maſter of the revels; and, ſurrounded by a party of his own particular aſſociates, danced once more, as he had ſo often wiſhed, upon the moon-light ſhore of Naples.

As Vivaldi and Ellena were paſſing the ſpot which Paulo had choſen for the ſcene of his feſtivity, they pauſed to obſerve his ſtrange capers and extravagant geſticulation, as he mingled in the dance, while every now-and-then he ſhouted forth, though

though half breathleſs with the heartineſs of the exerciſe, "*O! giorno felice! O! giorno felice!*"

On perceiving Vivaldi, and the ſmiles with which he and Ellena regarded him, he quitted his ſports, and advancing, "Ah! my dear maſter," ſaid he, "do you remember the night, when we were travelling on the banks of the Celano, before that diabolical accident happened in the chapel of San Sebaſtian; don't you remember how thoſe people, who were tripping it away ſo joyouſly, by moonlight, reminded me of Naples and the many merry dances I had ſooted on the beach here?"

"I remember it well," replied Vivaldi.

"Ah! Signor *mio*, you ſaid at the time, that you hoped we ſhould ſoon be here, and that then I ſhould friſk it away with as glad a heart as the beſt of them. The firſt part of your hope, my dear maſter,

maſter, you was out in, for, as it happened, we had to go through purgatory before we could reach paradiſe; but the ſecond part is come at laſt;—for here I am, ſure enough! dancing by moonlight, in my own dear bay of Naples, with my own dear maſter and miſtreſs, in ſafety, and as happy *almoſt* as myſelf; and with that old mountain yonder, Veſuvius, which I, forſooth! thought I was never to ſee again, ſpouting up fire, juſt as it uſed to do before we got ourſelves put into the Inquiſition! O! who could have foreſeen all this! *O! giorno felice! O! giorno felice!*"

"I rejoice in your happineſs, my good Paulo," ſaid Vivaldi, "almoſt as much as in my own; though I do not entirely agree with you as to the comparative proportion of each."

"Paulo!" ſaid Ellena, "I am indebted to you beyond any ability to repay;

pay; for to your intrepid affection your maſter owes his preſent ſafety. I will not attempt to thank you for your attachment to him; my care of your welfare ſhall prove how well I know it; but I wiſh to give to all your friends this acknowledgment of your worth, and of my ſenſe of it."

Paulo bowed, and ſtammered, and writhed and bluſhed, and was unable to reply: till, at length, given a ſudden and lofty ſpring from the ground, the emotion, which had nearly ſtifled him, burſt forth in words, and "*O! giorno felice! O! giorno felice!*" flew from his lips with the force of an electric ſhock. They communicated his enthuſiaſm to the whole company; the words paſſed like lightening from one individual to another, till Vivaldi and Ellena withdrew amidſt a choral ſhout, and all the woods and ſtrands of Naples re-echoed with—"*O! giorno felice! O! giorno felice!*"

"You

"You ſee," ſaid Paulo, when they had departed, and he came to himſelf again, "you ſee how people get through their misfortunes, if they have but a heart to bear up againſt them, and do nothing that can lie on their conſcience afterwards; and how ſuddenly one comes to be happy, juſt, perhaps, when one is beginning to think one never is to be happy again! Who would have gueſſed that my dear maſter and I, when we were clapped up in that diabolical place, the Inquiſition, ſhould ever come out again into this world! Who would have gueſſed, when we were taken before thoſe old devils of Inquiſitors, ſitting there all of a row in a place under ground, hung with black, and nothing but torches all around, and faces grinning at us, that looked as black as the gentry aforeſaid; and when I was not ſo much as ſuffered to open my mouth; no! they would not let me open my mouth to my maſter!—who, I ſay, would have gueſſed

gueſſed we ſhould ever be let looſe again! who would have thought we ſhould ever know what it is to be happy! Yet here we are all abroad once more! All at liberty! And may run, if we will, ſtraight forward, from one end of the earth to the other, and back again without being ſtopped! May fly in the ſea, or ſwim in the ſky, or tumble over head and heels into the moon! For remember, my good friends, we have no lead in our conſciences to keep us down!"

"You mean ſwim in the ſea, and fly in the ſky, I ſuppoſe," obſerved a grave perſonage near him, "but as for tumbling over head and heels into the moon! I don't know what you mean by that!"

"Pſhaw!" replied Paulo, "who can ſtop, at ſuch a time as this, to think about what he means! I wiſh that all thoſe, who on this night are not merry enough to ſpeak before they think, may ever after be grave enough to think before they

they ſpeak! But you, none of you, no! not one of you! I warrant, ever ſaw the roof of a priſon, when your maſter happened to be below in the dungeon, nor know what it is to be forced to run away, and leave him behind to die by himſelf. Poor ſouls! But no matter for that, you can be tolerably happy, perhaps, notwithſtanding; but as for gueſſing how happy I am, or knowing any thing about the matter,——O! its quite beyond what you can underſtand. *O! giorno felice! O! giorno felice!*" repeated Paulo, as he bounded forward to mingle in the dance, and "*O! giorno felice!*" was again ſhouted in chorus by his joyful companions.

THE END.

